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Strangers to Berea

Critics of the Sunday school, both the friendly and unfriendly, are fond of illustrating their criticisms with anecdotes of crass ignorance of the Bible on the part of Sunday school pupils and graduates. Sometimes these anecdotes are so ridiculous as to make good copy for the funny column of the secular newspapers. But even when they are not exaggerated they are largely unfair—unfair to the teachers and the pupils. Some stupid boys and girls and men and women are likely to be found in any Sunday school, just as in any other group. There may even be a few professors!

Exceptions Both Ways

The obtuseness of these exceptions, however, should not discredit our Bible teaching. For one intermediate grade who puts Paul instead of Peter on the housetop in Acts 10 there will be a score who can make the incident into a clear and accurate story. Our teachers of all grades do "the best they can with what they have." When my old teacher Henry G. Weston, presi-

dent of Crozer Seminary, was asked by a Baptist state convention to explain why the theological seminaries do not send out more efficient ministers, his was a trifle saucy reply—borrowing Aaron's words to Moses—was, "We put in the gold and there comes out the calf." Our Sunday school young people—and adults who have had Sunday school training—are not the only ones who fall down on Bible facts and get their narratives twisted. I have heard rather scholarly preachers apply the name "Balaam" to the ass and make Elijah restore to life the Shunammite's son.

In School and College

Nor is it any worse with our Sunday school pupils and graduates than with those who receive the education of the secular schools. Their answers are likewise grist for the jokesters. After majoring in English they will locate Desdemona in the "Merchant of Venice" and make Thomas Chatterton an eighteenth-century prime minister. I was shown the examination-paper in French of a college student—high-grade college at that—who had had two years in the language, on top of a college-board-entrance pass in French. That paper was heart-breaking—for the distance that young man kept from the actual French language.

People Do Know the Bible

All of us who work at religious education realize well enough our failure to put the Bible across. Yet things are not so bad in this respect as they are sometimes made out to be. Whether or no, in some way or other, the Bible is a pretty well-known book, among young and old, high and low, the godly and the ungodly—and the Sunday school may take most of the credit for it. As this is being written the radio is featuring question-and-answer programs, and as I listen in I have been surprised at the large proportion of correct answers that are given to Bible questions. It has been my fortune to serve as a "guest" teacher for many Sunday school classes here and there, and, again, I have found a surprisingly large number of the pupils in these classes well up in the Bible.

A Saving Knowledge of the Bible

Looking at the matter in another aspect, we Sunday school people are not nearly so much concerned about ignorance of the materials of the Bible as are the critics of our work, because we realize that if the spirit and spiritual teachings of Scripture are gotten across, ignorance of its "letter"—names, data and sequence of events—may be overlooked. We believe that the good Bible student will make all the better a Christian; but, alas! we know good Bible students who are not at all good Christians.

The Sunday School and the Fourth of July

For at least a generation past the American Sunday school has featured patriotism almost as much as has the public school. Large account has been taken of Independence Day on a neighboring Sunday. This has been deemed eminently proper, for love of country is obviously a legitimate element of religion. The man who is not a loyal citizen is unlikely to be a loyal Christian. High ideals of government should be presented, in sermon and teaching. Jesus' teaching as to the attitude his followers are to maintain to the state, to the obligations of citizenship, must be carefully worked out and presented. There is adequate Gospel data. It is beside the point to say that specific statements of his about these matters are lacking. General guiding principles, and his spirit, are not lacking. Above all, we must endeavor to tone down the fiery militarism to which many young people are inclined; to "transfer," "sublimate," it into a militancy against wrong, against sin, against the devil. We say "many young people." Not all, by any means. For everyone in touch with the youth of today knows that a revolt of youth against war and the things that encourage warring is under way and must be reckoned with. Christian education should direct this revolt, temper it with reasonableness, the common sense of Jesus, and the sacrificial spirit of his gospel. In hating war and driving war to the discard the coming generation must be none the less devoted to the commonweal—an old-fashioned but noble and meaningful word for one's country. Baptists are historically and inherently pacifists, but at the same time sticklers, in love, for justice, liberty, and of course the human welfare.

The United Christian Advance

The National Preaching Mission succeeded in stimulating the Christian churches of America; now the problem of conservation is an acute one. In an attempt to solidify Protestant forces in a constant and cooperative program the United Christian Advance has been brought into being. At a meeting of representative Christian leaders in Columbus, Ohio, in April, definite progress was made in this direction. The work of that conference will continue at Lake Geneva during the present month.

The Need of It

Three major reasons call for the United Christian Advance: (1) Pressure from local churches upon national agencies to integrate their field promotion so as to reduce the number of separate approaches for promotional and program purposes. (2) Such movements as the United Youth Movement, the United Christian Adult Movement, summer projects in under-

privileged areas, the National Laymen's Commission, and the new Home Missions Advance became broader than the functions of the councils initiating them. It is desirable to develop some commonly accepted patterns of intercouncil and administrations. (3) The need of unifying the various national programs under a single state agency, thereby reducing the number of promotional secretaries in the field.

Baptist Participation

It is hoped that a field strategy may be developed for Protestantism that will enable the churches to claim public attention and assert influence upon individuals and the social order on a broader scale. Baptist adults and young adults are urged to give their full leadership and support to this United Christian Advance. This may be done without sacrifice in the least one's loyalty to the local church and the Northern Convention. It is in particular to recognize the urgency of cooperation in certain areas of mutual interest.

Churchless Towns

"Notwithstanding all that has been done," says the Home Mission Council, "there are still ten thousand villages in rural America today without a church of any kind—Jewish, Roman Catholic or Protestant; thirty thousand villages without a pastor; 13,400,000 children under twelve years of age who are receiving no religious instruction; more than one-half of the population of the nation today not connected with any institution representing organized religion. Besides the unmet religious needs of these unoccupied areas and unchristianized groups, the life of the nation is threatened by sinful attitudes: self-will—the desire to be outside the law of obedience; self-interest—the desire to be outside the law of sacrifice; self-complacency—the desire to be outside the law of fellowship. Only the service of Christian love can save America from these three deadly foes."

A Prayer-Meeting, Only

One of the best prayer-meetings that I have ever known was the weekly class prayer-meeting which helped maintain for the four years of a college course. There was never a leader, and we had an understanding and iron-clad rule that it should consist of nothing but prayers. The singing of such a group would not have been inspiring, and it is doubtful if we would have been interested in one another's experiences and exhortations; but there was an appeal to each of us and to God, I am sure, in our honest, earnest, youthful, talking to him. Have you ever tried such a prayer-meeting—that was nothing else?

God Prepares a People

By JOHN SNAPE, D. D., Los Angeles, California

"So Joseph died . . . and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt." Thus the record runs, and thus also runs the record of life. Joseph was a youth of seventeen when he entered Egypt, and he died at the age of seventy. Fascinating have been the lessons we have had about Joseph, but there arose a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph."

For four hundred years the Hebrews have been in Egypt—first as refugees and later as slaves, but now they are in conflict with the Pharaoh which knew not Joseph.

In the sprightly words of Dr. J. E. McFayden: "The foemen were well matched. Moses never yields an inch of ground and Pharaoh yields but little. But it is a struggle of right against might, of the unseen against the seen, and the unseen must prevail. . . But it ends at last in a climax of extraordinary magnificence. Pharaoh rises like a giant, refuses the demand of Moses, and forbids him, on pain of death, to look upon his face again. Moses takes him at his word and leaves him, with a flash of anger on his face, after announcing the last terrible blow of all."

Before that last blow fell—the death of the first-born of the Egyptians—Moses had been preparing the Israelites for their departure from Egypt. In Saint Peter's Church at Rome, Angelo's Moses stands a gigantic statue. We have seen him earlier, before he had control of himself, when he slew the Egyptian. Now we see him, his turbulent temper under control, because he had conquered himself. It is a sublime figure now that confronts Pharaoh on his throne. He does not hesitate to say, "God hath spoken unto me—let my people go!"

Joseph was the dreamer, Moses the doer. Joseph the interpreter of dreams, Moses the dream-fulfiller. Moses set himself against the order of his day. Again and again he went before Pharaoh with the curt command, "Let my people go!" With threat of frogs and lice and boils and hail, he enforced his curt command, "Let my people go!"

The Hebrew has ever belonged to the "people of the restless feet"—but the restlessness of driven necessity. He was expelled from England in 1290; from France in 1391; from Spain in 1492; and at different times from Russia, Germany, Switzerland and Italy. He has found in Babylon his desert, in England his judgment-hall, in Russia his *via dolorosa*, in Spain his Gethsemane—and wonders if, now, he is to find in Germany his Golgotha! Justly he complains against his persecutions and discriminations. Foxes

have had holes, the birds of the air nests, but the Jew, like the Son of man, has not had where to lay his head—and call it his own abiding-place.

In the name of Christianity, if not in the name of humanity, people everywhere unitedly should cry out against the persecutions of the Hebrew people. By the Israelite's tenacity of his nationality, by the liberality of his philanthropy, by the sanctity of his domesticity, by his contribution to Christianity we should base the words of our protest and phrase the words of our denunciation.

A people that can boast among scholars a Spinoza, among statesmen a Disraeli, among socialists a Marx, among authors a Zangwill, among bankers a Rothschild, among musicians a Mendelssohn, among poets a David, among prophets an Isaiah, among apostles a Paul, among leaders a Moses, among saviours Our Saviour, need not be reticent about its history or ashamed of its influence.

"If some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive-tree, were grafted in among them . . . boast not against the branches . . . for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee . . . for God is able to graft them in again. . . And so all Israel shall be saved."

It is easy to judge a race by its poorest representatives. That is the reason why America is derided and despised in those countries to which we have permitted to go Americans with low moral ideals and commercial instincts, with unwholesome regard for law, whose conceptions of the rights of Americans in foreign lands have been set forth in efforts to outwit and exploit the natives. Such Americans are not Americans, just anarchists. As America resents the interpretation of the American spirit by its worst representatives abroad, so do the races of mankind that have found footing and a field on America's shore ask us to judge them by the best and not by the worst among them.

The history of any people is simply the history of its greatest men. In three great leaders, Touissaint L'Ouverture, Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington, are seen the moral, political, educational and industrial possibilities of the Negro race.

In 1619 there were just twenty Negroes in America, and they all lived at Jamestown. They were brought over as slaves from Africa in a Dutch vessel. In 1807 these twenty had increased to one million; in 1860 to nearly four and a half million; today there are twelve million Negroes in America.

(Concluded on page 210)

To Be Discovered and Enlisted

By O. G. HERBRECHT,¹ Des Moines, Iowa

The new "reaching the unreached" emphasis of the church is a definite challenge to adult classes. There are an amazing number of grown-up folks who no longer attend the church school—if they ever did. Some have merely dropped away, feeling that their "Sunday school days are over." The revitalizing of these will be the harder task. Then there are the great masses who have somehow slipped past the doors of the church school all their life.

Inasmuch as adults are still the "ruling class" in the affairs of man, the lack of religious vitality among them and their open disinterest in the Christian program through the church can well become the deciding color in the pattern of America's social and economic life of tomorrow. These unreached constitute three distinct groups: the young married people, the men and women in the prime of life, and the aged. The discovery and enlistment of this unreached citizenry is a real task for the church—a field that is wide, if not always white unto the harvest. Into this field are beginning to move some of the awakened men and women of the church. There has been inaugurated, by the church in unison, a United Christian Advance, a definite part of whose program is this reaching of the non-church adults. This article projects briefly the fields to be entered, and some methods for interesting and enlisting men and women.

I. DISCOVERING

There are at least ten reliable sources, continuous year after year, where the unreached may be found.

1. *The occasional visitor to the church.* Many churches keep a fairly accurate record of every such visitor, with as much information as possible as to full name, address, size of family, occupation, church relationship, and probable permanency. While many of these represent a transient group, the churches are finding such records very fruitful.

2. *The nursery department of the church school,* familiarly known as the cradle roll. Where there are babies there are parents, and the church is quite aware of the strategic importance of the littlest ones. The distance between the adult department and the cradle roll seems to be the full length of the program of religious education; but here it is a case where "making both ends meet" is extremely profitable in Kingdom terms. A weekly check-up is recommended.

3. *The home, or extension, department.* The writer

remembers an adult class in a former charge that operated unusually close with the home department superintendent in a definite and continuous campaign among home department members. It was really surprising to see the number who had "felt they could get away on Sunday" suddenly rearrange affairs and become active attendants of the church school. Our present economic order demands extensive Sunday work by telephone-operators, transportation employees, public utilities, hospital attendants, and the like. There are changes of hours and days taking place constantly among these, releasing many adults free time to time for church contacts. They work for us; they certainly do not deserve to remain unreached.

4. *The newspapers.* "Names are news," as an editor will tell you. Even metropolitan dailies give some space to new arrivals in the city. The small town papers do even more of it. The adult class carefully clipping these notices provides itself with great "leads" into new homes.

5. *The moving-vans.* These and the newspaper work together quite well. In every neighborhood there are vans to be watched as they unload—to bring new neighbors to the street. It may be just a family transferring from one part of the city to another, and again it may be a van from out of town; at any rate it will be worth watching.

6. *The community clubs.* Many adults of the church belong to these organizations—luncheon clubs, cultural clubs, fraternal bodies, civic organizations. There they come easily into contact with other men and women who want to "belong" to something social, but have shunned the church. Probably even a casual survey of the clubs to which you belong will reveal quite a number of the "unreached"—and they keep coming all the time. In most cases these organizations, while not at all religious, are basically in harmony with accepted Christian social ideals—and there we have the gang-plank laid from the ship to the dock!

7. *The marriage-license bureau.* Young people who marry become automatically adults—in experience, not in age! In the dawning of their new home life they are very apt to be susceptible to the ideals of Christianity. They are in the idealistic mood—it is the constituent of the honeymoon. Usually they are rather anxious to become part of their new environment and if it is too new, and too far away from "home" a bit of lonesomeness helps to open the door. The membership committee of the adult class ought to be instructed to keep in close contact with the local marriage-license bureau!

¹ The writer is director of young people's work for the Iowa Council of Christian Education. He is the author of *Facing North, The Extension Division of the Church School*, and many published dramatizations and religious educational articles.

8. *The public school faculty.* While a large number of our school-teachers are in the later section of the young people's division, this is a field very much worth watching and cultivating. Especially the superintendents and principals are likely to be in the adult division, and most of the high school teachers. Often, too, there is a generous sprinkling of the older teachers to be found in the grades. The majority of school leaders are interested in character education and sympathetic to the church programs of the community. A number of churches have each autumn a reception for the "new teachers," thereby achieving a contact that is profitable from many angles.

9. *The pastor's visitation-list.* The pastor, more than likely, has such a list, whose names extend considerably beyond the actual membership of the church; names that have come to him through one channel or another. And he will surely be delighted to have the active assistance of his adult workers in reaching the owners of these names. Incidentally, this list will reveal to the church school adults the names of the membership who "come to church" but are not interested in the church school. Forget not, they too are among the "unreached"!

10. *Social-service institutions.* Large or small, every community has the care of those who need material help. They live in the shanties, dug-outs, along the river, in the hollows of hills, along the railroad-tracks, near the "dumps." They are—many of them—the most unattractive personnel of the community. To reach them requires not only courage but grace. Yet they are also God's children, and need the ministry of the soul as badly as that of the body. But apart from this group are the many to be found in hospitals, old folks' homes, and the like. And the long line of those who are on government "relief," living in fairly respectable quarters, keeping themselves clean and law-abiding, but largely out of touch with any religious life. All of these groups can be contacted either by surveys or by securing names from the public service lists.

II. ENLISTING

He who would harvest must go into the field. Nor may he wander about it aimlessly, cutting here and there at will. He will select his starting-row and move in a definite direction. Recruiting new members is like that. It is wiser to recruit for a new member than for new members. There is generally not much result from a campaign whose slogan is "All we can do." Select definite names, assign them to definite members, set time limits for results. Be tactful, Christ-spirited, long-suffering—and persevering.

1. *Personal visitation.* It should be done in a neighborly rather than professional spirit. In fact, it might well begin with the next-door neighbor. A few years

ago an active churchman told the writer that he had lived at one time for ten years between two neighbors who were very loyal to their churches, yet neither had ever asked him to go to his church or even whether he was a Christian! Yes, it might be well to start next door.

In many cases one call is not enough. There is on record a class that arranged to have one of its members—each day a different one—call on the prospect for a whole week. On Saturday night they scheduled a series of telephone-calls to the man's house, every fifteen minutes. At 3 a. m. he surrendered! Such perseverance deserves the motto of the old patriarch, "I will not let thee go until thou bless me."

2. *By mail.* Letters and announcements are only supplemental to, not substitutes for, personal visitation. Such material when used should consist of attractively phrased letters, written preferably by hand, and sent by first-class mail in plain envelopes—addressed also by hand—to insure being read. Weekly or monthly class-papers and bulletins should be sent regularly to prospects, and in spite of seeming lack of results. Do not give up. The great mail-order houses get most of their orders after the fifteenth letter! Into the writer's home comes every month the little bulletin of an undertaker! We have never given him any personal business—are thankful for that—but his unfailing courtesy is appreciated; and the bulletin brings food for good thought and clippings for many uses. This undertaker is not advertising his business so much as developing a spirit of friendliness with possible prospective customers.

3. *Inclusion in activities.* This is a familiar and popular method—inviting prospects to the social activities of the church. It is a nice gesture and has brought many, by the social detour, to the doors of the Kingdom. It is considered advisable, however, not to ask more than two or three at a time. Also, that the activity be genuinely social and have no appearance of "bait." There should be no sales talk to the prospect at the first visit, unless of course he shows evident interest and some desire. It may be a happy thought to ask him on the spur of the moment to share in some simple task—as arranging chairs, or with the refreshments. Such a bit of recognition often goes far in making the newcomer feel included—which is far more than just being present.

4. *Developing real friendships.* Acquaintances can easily be cultivated into friendships. And friendship is a stronger drawing-power than mere courtesy. Friendship has no ulterior motives, for it is the welding of a kinship between two persons. To this end, a serious caution should be heeded: hesitate about placing the prospect under obligation. The charity route leads to few friendships. A poor family that has been given clothing, food or money, will be hesitant

about coming to the giving group. That is just human nature. Material assistance, often necessary, should be kept distinct from the recruiting program. In fact, it is better if such services were rendered by the group to some who would be eligible only to another group—such as by an older class to a younger person. The adult class is not likely to secure many new members from the ranks of those it has placed under material obligation. There are exceptions, of course, but the rule will be found to hold in most cases.

5. *Contests.* This is placed last because in recent years this method has been seriously questioned. It has resulted too often in discontent within the church and among the churches of a community. "Sheep-stealing" it used to be called. Moreover, those who are won under a competitive drive seldom have proven permanent. Contests are only skin deep. *This busi-*

ness of winning adults requires heart action—love for the soul; and knee action—prayer and hard work.

Under certain well-guarded conditions contests may be used, with good results; though the ultimate harvest is practically always out of proportion to the investment made.

The older, biblical method is to be preferred. The Hebrews wanted Hobab, Moses' father-in-law, to go with them on their long journey to the Promised Land. He refused. They said, "Come thou with us and we will do thee good." He still refused. He didn't need any "good"—he had plenty. Then they said, "Come with us—be unto us as eyes!" And he went. He knew the way—he had something they could use. The appeal to service is far stronger than the lure of a celluloid button. When Christ says "Come!" to a man, it's usually because he wants to use him.

Community Organization in Religious Education¹

By J. QUINTER MILLER

General Secretary of the Connecticut Council of Churches and Religious Education

Two principles emerge when we analyze the motives which guide human conduct. The first has to do with the love of the Eternal—God, values, the great ethical and religious meanings which place their imperative upon the mind of man. The second deals with love of family, house, home, community and nation. Both of these principles are rooted in love, the deepest emotion of the human heart. Around the first principle the great religions of the world group themselves, ways of interpreting the eternal verities of our world. Around the second arise the national loyalties, so acute in the world today. The institutional expression of the first is the church, that of the second the state.

The founders of this nation knew the message which history teaches concerning the clash between these two great streams of human affection. In fact, many of them had left their fatherland and migrated to America to regain that freedom of conscience so deeply cherished and so ruthlessly denied in Europe. As a consequence, the principle of the separation of church and state was effectively established by this liberty-loving people. The laws of the state were supreme save in the realm of conscience. The affairs of religion, however, were not and are not subject to human coercion. Religious liberty and religious freedom, so dearly bought, were by our form of government to be cherished and protected forever.

Yet when today we contemplate world conditions the encroachment upon religious liberty is most startling. Witness Germany, Russia, Italy and Mexico. Even in America the seeds of totalitarianism—the arch enemy of religious liberty and human freedom—are being planted. Witness here: the Black Legion, the denial to the alien conscientious objector the rights and privileges of citizenship, and the nation-wide campaign to enact teachers' loyalty oaths. Still more serious is the almost universal failure of adults to cherish the religious freedom which has been our heritage. One is to judge from the behavior of the masses in our adult population there is serious doubt whether "the love for the Eternal" has not grown dim.

This is the situation which confronts organized religion. The test we face is religious liberty struggling to survive the inroads of a nationalistic totalitarian paganism. An effective program of Christian education within community life is the sure answer to this threat. For Protestantism—so divided that its efforts are often futile when seeking to counteract and ameliorate the surging social forces with which the church is surrounded—there is only one course to follow. It must achieve the fruits of unity through cooperation. The forces arrayed against it are organized and militant. They are too powerful for a divided church. These same forces are also the enemy of democratic government. If democracy is defeated with it will go religious freedom. The church must see this danger and organize to meet it, while there is yet time.

¹ This is one of a series of articles made available through the International Council of Religious Education as one of the means of making effective the current emphasis on the community under the slogan "Building Together a Christian Community."

1. *Community of interest sets the boundary of the organizational area.* The cooperative program of religious education must deal with the religious needs of those who dwell together in communities. These communities of interest include trade, housing, education, recreation and religion. These are the living issues which touch human conduct. They embrace both love of the Eternal and love of locality. Generations of change have made these community groupings what they are today. Geography, topography, transportation and political zones are influential causes of community unity. Religion, however, while professing to minister to human need, has not been organized with such broad areas in mind. Creedal differences—ways of interpreting man's relation to the Eternal—have set the mold for denominational alignments. The political unit of town or county has generally been the determining factor in limiting the area for interchurch cooperation. Neither of these practices is valid if we seek to enlist the participation of men and women in making Christianity a living force in all community relationships. In fact, unless the divisiveness and prejudice of denominationalism can be overcome through cooperation, and the artificiality of the county or town council area replaced by a more accurate grouping, based on community interests of trade, education, transportation, recreation, government and religion, they may prove to be insurmountable obstacles to the preservation of religious liberty and the extension of the kingdom of God through Christian education.

Fortunately, the Christian church is awakening to these facts. It is becoming conscious of the whole Gospel. It sees the unity of its message, personal and social. It realizes personal nurture must be accompanied by vigorous social action. Two excellent cases in point are the Preaching Mission and the wide-spread interest in consumer cooperatives. Just as the state department labors for reciprocal tariffs, and the treasury department seeks monetary stabilization, in order to set free again the forces of world trade—both based on cooperation—so must our denominations lower the walls of sectarian prejudice and our city and county councils redistrict their organizational boundaries. When the crooked road to cooperative planning to meet the religious needs and social problems of the community will be made straighter and the rough places now caused by divided loyalties and competition of programs made plain.

2. *The community organization a servant.* Recently the president of a certain community council of religious education was very much discouraged. He related how he had tried repeatedly to call a meeting of its executive committee, but those who had accepted membership were totally disinterested and would not attend a meeting. How clearly this reveals the attitude

of externality, with which the Christian leaders of this community regard their council! It is an "extra" agency, and a non-essential one at that. In the pressure of regular work it can easily be pushed aside and forgotten. The main business of organized religion passes it by. No great cause is bound up with its success.

We have here a point of view which is essentially erroneous, and until it is corrected the community organization for religious education will continue to be ineffective. Let it be understood that the community organization is a creature of the Christian forces which compose it. They create it in order to minister to certain great communal needs with which organized religion is concerned. If these needs are clearly perceived, and if the community organization has been functionally developed to minister specifically to such needs, such an attitude as that described above may be removed. For the council ceases to be something separate and apart from the forces which compose it; namely, the churches, the denominations, the neighborhoods, and the institutions and people. Rather, the same energies, personnel, resources and objectives which make up the diverse agencies which cooperate through the council likewise flow through it. As such it serves as the extension of their efforts. It is an intimate and integral part of their lives. It was created to serve them. By means of democratic participation the resources and power of the many diversified Christian forces may be discovered and focused powerfully upon the specific needs with which the moral and spiritual life of the community is confronted.

Some communities have followed the practice of including only the denominational forces when constituting a community council. This is a serious mistake. All the Christian agencies resident within the community should be included. Frequently district and neighborhood groups can make valuable contributions to community planning because they are community-conscious rather than denominationally-conscious. What is needed is the whole-hearted participation of denominational and community Christian agencies and institutions, all democratically sharing in the development of an adequate program of Christian nurture.

3. *Suggested avenues for program-planning.* The following lines of approach may serve to illustrate how a given community council proceeds to develop its program of action.

(a) *The Preaching Mission*

The leaders of local churches learned about the plans and objectives of the National Preaching Mission. They realized that the church and community life of this area needed spiritual reawakening. Accordingly, the evangelistic committees of the constituent denomi-

nations and representatives of neighborhood areas convened under the sponsorship of the council and outlined the following plan: To hold a one-day preaching mission in early December, preceded by three months of preparation and prayer. The second stage was to consist of neighborhood two-day preaching missions during the National Week of Prayer in January. The third stage was to be eight-day preaching missions in each local church. The central purpose of each stage was "to realize moral and spiritual power, and to open the way for a remaking of the inner life and the outer life of this country by a fresh impact of the Spirit of God."

(b) *The United Youth Movement*

The Christian young people of each denomination have been selecting simultaneously the same emphasis in the Christian Youth Building a New World Movement. Each group found they needed inspiration, ideas and source materials to make these emphases effective. Accordingly, they have used the council as an agency through which to prepare and train leaders who later function in local groups. Every three months a two-day coaching conference is held to prepare for the next emphasis. The four chosen for this year are: Christian patriotism; a new church; winning others; and the Cooperative Movement. Incidentally, the sense of fellowship and comradeship generated through these efforts has brought new power and genuineness into the entire youth movement.

(c) *The United Adult Movement*

The participation of adults in the study work and worship phases of the religious life of the community was found to be at a low ebb. This condition was not limited to a single denomination but generally observable in all. Using the council's Commission on Activities as the deliberative body, plans for meeting this situation were evolved. They include the following: Self-study of adult needs in Christian education by fifty selected local churches; a two-day "week-end retreat" to coach selected leaders of adult life in plans and practices for the emphasis, "a new church" (this coextensive with the youth movement emphasis in January and the regional preaching missions); leadership training classes for teachers of young adults; Lenten schools of religion to constitute the educational follow-up of the preaching mission.

(d) *Christian Social Action*

The state legislature will meet in January. Many proposals for social legislation have a bearing upon Christian ethics. Religion must make an appraisal of these proposals and render intelligent assistance to its constituency in arriving at Christian decisions. In order to augment this appraisal a social legislation bulletin has been authorized. It will present frankly

the pros and cons of each bill, list the sponsors of each bill, and give supplementary resources for further study. This bulletin will be used by the church forums, classes and seminars to guide investigation and shape individual opinion. Furthermore, each citizen is encouraged to express his opinion to his legislative representatives.

(e) *Family Religious Education*

The practice of family fellowship in prayer was found to be generally abandoned. Yet the nurture of the spiritual life is the central function of Christian family life. To reawaken this practice and to guide parents and children in their family prayer fellowship the council's Committee on the Christian Education of Children prepared, "Thoughts of God for Boys and Girls Before Easter"—a guide to family prayers for the fifty-two days of Lent. This, together with the "Adult Fellowship of Prayer," was widely circulated in the families of many Protestant and some Catholic churches, and constituted another basic educational undergirding of the Preaching Mission, the United Youth and Adult Movements and Christian Social Action.

NOTE. For suggestions relative to organizational structure and procedures of community organization in religious education, consult *The International Journal of Religious Education* for January, February and March, 1935.

The Church in Spain Today

A "small group of responsible" English churchmen, from both the Established and Free churches, have recently issued a report on the position of the Spanish church. While their study was unofficial it is significant. They say: "We found no evidence of an organized 'Godless' propaganda such as has existed in Soviet Russia. We were unable on inquiry to hear of any caricatures of God, of Christ, or of the Virgin and saints, such as have been features of 'anti-God' propaganda in other countries. On the other hand, members of our party found copies of the Scriptures offered freely for sale on street book-stalls. The situation in regard to religion in Spain was summed up to us by a very acute English observer of dispassionate views, one who knows Spain well and is himself a practising Catholic, in the following terms: 'There is a strong anticlerical movement but no anti-God movement in Spain.'"—*British Weekly*, London, February 18, 1937.

I RATHER dread to hear a company of ordinary Christians sing that hymn, "I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord," because I know that many of them would be unwilling to go half a dozen blocks to church on a rainy Sunday.—*Nathan Pierce, Jr.*

Revitalizing a Church Through a Young Married People's Class

By Hillyer H. Straton, Th. D., Muncie, Indiana

It is trite to say that leadership is essential to any organization, yet it is none the less a fact. This is particularly true of churches, for the chief incentive to work in the church is loyalty to those who are leading.

The Bible might be paraphrased, "If the leaders be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" In many churches there comes a period when those who have been long in leadership are taken by death. Every pastor has had occasion to observe the rapidity with which the complexion of a church changes. This is especially noticeable when he returns to a former charge. Men and women who gave largely and liberally of their time and money have passed to their reward. This loss of outstanding personnel can have a very serious effect unless it be offset by a corresponding infusion of new life.

In our present charge we were faced with just this problem. It was augmented by the fact that the loss of leaders meant a corresponding loss of income, and at a time when such loss was serious because of a building program that the church had entered upon. For my own information, I totaled the figures and found that within three years death had deprived our church of nearly one hundred dollars a week in income. The normal increase in membership did not begin to make the financial place of those who had died. It requires a lifetime of Christian service before a man is able or willing to give to his church as much as, say, fifteen dollars a week. It is quite evident that the loss of three or four such men may seriously cripple the work.

More serious than the monetary loss, however, was the gap left by the outstanding Christian leadership of these godly departed men and women. The problem we had to face was how best to fill the gap. In the course of the normal growth of a church a certain amount of new leadership naturally develops; such growth, however, is too slow. Death can remove a group of leaders within a very short period that normally would take years to replace.

In facing this problem we had to decide where efforts expended would produce the largest results. Some would say, "Work with the young people." This is true, for the church and the Kingdom, in the long view; but, again, it is slow; and young people marry and move away, as well as lose interest. Work could have been expended in a class of mature men, but the men were very well organized and were doing splendid work in places of leadership in the church. It was doubtful that much more could be accomplished here than was already being done.

The answer was found in a young married people's class. There had been no such class in the church school, and consequently few of this group in the church. About five years ago a letter announcing the formation of this class was sent to young married people in the church who would possibly be interested. A small group met and the class got under way. The usual methods of building a class, by inviting friends, having contests and social occasions were resorted to with good success. As pastor I taught the class because I wanted the contact with the young couples. Then, too, the pastor can make a special appeal to those whom he marries to unite with the class.

In many ways a class of young married people can do more to fill gaps in the life of a church than any other group. For one thing, young married people are usually settled. There is not much likelihood of their moving away. If they are at all seriously inclined, they are buying homes and establishing families, and in general trying to fit themselves into the life of the community. The enthusiasm of youth is still upon them, and yet the responsibilities of adults make them steady and sound in their loyalties and decisions. A mixed class at this age is invaluable, because the wife tends to bring the husband and the husband the wife. When there are children they accompany their parents. This naturally swells other departments of the church school.

It has been fascinating to observe the growth in this class, growth in Christian character even more than growth in numbers. In many instances couples with no church connection and no church interest first came to the class because of friends. Attracted by social contacts, they became interested in Bible study. The next step was attendance upon and service in the church. At special seasons of in-gathering, during a revival or at Easter, it has been my privilege to receive many from this class by baptism—as well as by letter. There is a gratifying readiness to unite with the church when the claims of Christ are presented in a quiet, personal manner. This is due to the emphasis in the lesson periods on the necessity for regeneration and acceptance of the Christ way of life. Once a couple have become active and share in the responsibility of the church they do not easily lose interest. There has not been a single case of dropping by the wayside in this particular class of mine.

Possibly this is due to the caliber of the class, which represents one of the finest groups of young married people in the city. Over half of them are college-trained. Many of the men are connected with the research division of local industries. An interesting reaction was secured at a recent lesson on two of the miracles of Jesus. A brilliant young engineer was asked if he had any difficulty in believing in the miracles of Jesus. His reply was, "No, I took too

much chemistry at college and see too many miracles every day in my work!"

Their amenableness to suggestion is capitally illustrated by a talk on the joys of a family, given some two years ago in connection with one of the Uniform Lessons. Remember, they were young married people. Within eighteen months some fourteen babies arrived in the class!

Apart from the work done in the class here are some of the concrete results in the church. Six members now faithfully tithe their incomes. Nearly all give regularly through the envelopes. One young man is a deacon, another is our Sunday school superintendent, still another the assistant superintendent. Seven are teaching in the Sunday school, while one heads the intermediate department. (He is a big red-headed former football star and idolized by the boys of the department.) The wife of the young deacon has recently been elected as president of our church woman's department. Another class-member directs our choir of forty voices. (This past summer he and his wife conducted the largest daily vacation Bible

school in Indiana, with some two hundred and fifty enrolled.)

Small tasks in church work are not shunned. The class has had a great deal of joy preparing Christmas and Easter pageants, which have been very acceptable to the church and community. The fact that it is a mixed class helps, because couples can work together. At our Christmas "White Gifts for the King" service the red-headed baby boy of the football star was used in the manger. He had a grand time playing with fistfuls of straw! This added a dramatic touch to the occasion, for everyone felt that the baby Jesus must have played with the straw, just like the boys.

The young women of the class take an active part in the woman's department of the church. Whenever there is a task that needs to be done this class can be relied upon to furnish a doer. Like all young Christians they need much "growing in grace," but they are well on the road, and are becoming increasingly valuable to the church. The new life they are instilling into it is manifesting itself in many ways, and as the years go by their influence will be felt more and more.

What Some Statesmen Think of the Sunday School

GERALD P. NYE, United States Senator from North Dakota:

The Sunday school is a very essential part of every social community and has played a very large part in the building of men and women who can go into the world with a belief and confidence that enables them to contribute to the world's good. Not too much encouragement can be given to the building of the Sunday school and to its maintenance. It is playing a part that is very important to the future of mankind and of our country.

JOHN GARLAND POLLARD, ex-governor of Virginia:

Throughout the last half-century I have been scholar, teacher and superintendent of a Sunday school. I am informed that the Sunday schools now have enlisted in their ranks nineteen million persons. I consider this, the teaching agency of the church, the greatest single factor in promoting good citizenship.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT, JR., formerly governor-general of the Philippine Islands:

When I was a young man I not only attended but taught Sunday school, both in Oyster Bay and in Washington. I hope the classes I held helped the children who composed them, and I know the classes I attended helped me.

ALFRED M. LANDON, presidential candidate:

Beyond question is the value of the Sunday school in America. It stands for the religious attitude toward life, interpreting to its members the meaning of Christianity. It preserves centuries of religious history, teaches the background of the Christian religion, and the enduring worth of the Bible. It

regards human life as of supreme importance. It offers incentives for ideal living. In this generation we need to emphasize Christian character values. The Sunday school, the home, and the public school are invaluable assets.

JAMES E. WATSON, congressman and senator from Indiana:

In these hectic days when society seems to be in a state of flux and but little appears to be stable, it is of the very highest importance that the youth of the land should be educated in those solid fundamentals that make for the welfare of the human race through the development of the individual. We must not forget that society can be developed only by developing the units of that society, and anything that tends to retard intellectual and moral advancement, the upbuilding and progress of the individual in the end makes for the welfare of society and the stability of all worth-while institutions. Twenty-five millions of boys and girls can be thoroughly indoctrinated with the vital truths of the gospel through the Sunday school, the results will be so far-reaching that they cannot be measured or estimated. I cannot imagine anything of greater importance than the organization and development of Sunday schools throughout the land, a work I regard as absolutely essential to the welfare of our citizenship and the perpetuation of our institutions.

JOSEPHUS DANIELS, former secretary of the navy and ambassador to Mexico:

In the old days the Sunday school was regarded as the nursery of the church and was attended almost exclusively by children. In these latter days it has become an integral part of the church, and there are not a few communities where Sunday school enrolment is larger than the membership of the church. The business of the church is to reach people, and when they are reached, to teach them. In respect to teaching the Sunday school holds a position second only to the pulpit.

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

By ULYSS STANFORD MITCHELL, M. A., Th. D.

Director of Social and Adult Education¹

Lake Geneva Is Calling You

A conference on the local church program will be held in Lake Geneva July 9 to 14, at the call of the United Christian Adult Movement, of which Northern Baptists are an integral part. To come to Lake Geneva for this conference is your acceptance of a rare privilege. A splendid delegation is registered for attendance and a high experience awaits them and others who may yet join the group. In the words of last year's conference:

"To come to Lake Geneva is to court danger, for high spiritual adventure is afoot. It is to launch out into the deep and let down the nets. It is to share in the great creative process. It is to accept grave responsibility.

"Come if you dare!"

Those who "dared" testified that the actual experience was all that this call implied. Not only was a movement born, but those who participated in this creative enterprise experienced a new vitality and power in their own inner lives. The program for 1937 was designed to be equally enriching. This United Christian Adult Movement has been born within the past year. In local churches, among community religious forces, in denominational field programs, and in the great cooperative enterprises across the continent there are significant stirrings and renewed purpose in Christian adult life. Everywhere Baptist adults and young adults are catching the vision of possibilities in this united approach to a common cause.

We have prevailed upon the conference committee to increase the Northern Baptist quota from fifteen to thirty, which leaves a few last-minute reservations available for those desiring to share in this movement. *If you desire to attend and have not registered, please secure the approval of your pastor and wire the National Director of Adult Work at once.*

Conference Point Camp is one of nature's beauty-spots, located on "America's Galilee," Lake Geneva, Wis., seventy miles northwest of Chicago. From the evening meal Friday, July 9, through the noon meal Wednesday, July 14, five full days, the cost for board and room, two in a room, will be \$9.50. Delegate's fee to help in bringing resource leaders will be \$2.00, payable in advance at time of registration.

A delegated conference of national leaders is meeting at Lake Geneva July 3 to 9 to complete preliminary plans for the conference 9 to 14 and to develop further

the field outreach of the United Christian Adult Movement as it relates to its field activities, and to plan its place in the total cooperative program. For this conference Northern Baptists are allowed but five delegates, which have already been selected.

Young Adults of Indiana

State Director Rev. W. R. Jewell predicts one hundred young adults in the first institute to be held in Indiana for the age-group ranging from twenty to thirty-five years of age. This three-day institute will be held immediately following the Young People's Assembly, July 29 to August 1. It is an endeavor to meet the growing demands of older young people and young adults for Christian help in solving their life problems.

An Experiment in Elective Courses

By Willard R. Jewell, Director for Christian Education, Indiana

Last October I was called to the First Baptist Church of Kokomo, Ind., Rev. W. P. Pearce, pastor, to meet with their workers' conference. They were facing the problem of having too many adult classes and not enough room. They had seven classes for those above eighteen years of age, but felt that five would be sufficient. None of them could be combined; each had its social functions; there was no graduation from one to the other; and a large group of young married people were unprovided for. Every five years a new class for young married people had been organized. Should they now start another—or was there a better way?

After listening for an hour to their problems, I ventured to suggest that they try an experiment. I would hesitate to suggest this plan in more than ten percent of our churches. It would fail in most places. This, however, was a forward-looking church.

I suggested that they keep their present class organizations, with their monthly socials, exactly as they were, but that on Sunday morning they disregard those alignments entirely and offer instead five elective courses, giving each person over eighteen the privilege of enrolling in any one of the five courses, regardless of age or sex. This is the plan used in high school, in college, in the summer assembly, and in every other educational procedure except the church. We suggested that the courses follow the general lines set forth in the Learning for Life program. (See

¹ Correspondence regarding these departments may be addressed to the Director at 1701 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia.

Learning for Life program study plan in the ADULT LEADER for July and August.)

The plan was discussed for an hour and unanimously approved. I was asked to present it to the entire church the next Sunday morning. Opportunity was given for questions. There was universal approval, but no vote was taken. A week later the entire church voted on the new plan. Only a few voted in the negative. The next week I again met with the workers' conference to consider the courses to be offered. They decided on the following:

1. Understanding the Bible (a background study).
2. Understanding the Church (a historical study).
3. Personal Religious Living (a study of our basic Christian beliefs).
4. The Building of a Christian Home.
5. The regular Uniform Lessons.

The new classes began in November, to run for a three-months period. New courses will be offered

each quarter, and people will again be allowed to enroll as they desire. Unfortunately, there were only three who enrolled for the Uniform Lesson course. The number enrolling in Personal Religious Living was so small that it was combined with another course so that only three were offered.

I visited each of these classes recently and questioned a number of people about the new plan. I found only two who did not heartily endorse it. Interest had been deepened, initiative awakened, and they were eager to have a part in choosing the course for the next quarter. The pastor of the church comments as follows:

"I believe that in three months the plan will be working smoothly and generally accepted. The social life of the old classes continues as before. One of our sister churches has become interested and is trying it on a modified scale. Many public school teachers have gone out of their way to comment on and encourage the venture."

A Guided Plan of Study for Adults¹

By ULYSS STANFORD MITCHELL, M. A., Th. D.

Would you like to take your meals regularly at a restaurant where everybody was served exactly the same food in complete disregard of your individual likes and dislikes or your bodily needs? Your objections doubtless would be very logical. The needs of persons vary according to age, occupation, sex, condition of health, and peculiar digestive eccentricities. The physician might prescribe a liquid or soft diet for one and to another beefsteaks and raw vegetables. In the interest of physical and mental efficiency and well-being, individual needs cannot be disregarded for the sake of uniformity.

Yet we have employed this "regimentation" method in dispensing spiritual foods. We have said in effect, "Take this diet or do without," and vast numbers have done without. We have regarded the needs of all as identical and have not made adequate provision for instruction in various problem areas. This task of feeding hungry souls is not as simple as it might seem. Age, experience, training, practical ethical problems arising in their respective vocations, home and social environment, personality and temperamental eccentricities all have direct bearing upon the type of religious instruction most needed at the moment. It is too much to hope that the church can successfully meet all these personal needs in the teaching ministry of the church, but we can go a long way by rethinking our teaching approach.

"LEARNING FOR LIFE"

One prominent church of the Northern Baptist Convention was facing a critical problem with ingrown and self-satisfied adult classes. Their teaching program was ineffectual, and as a result the attendance had dropped to a mere handful. There was little to attract those earnestly seeking for guidance and edification. After careful consideration the pastor and board of Christian education secured the consent of the adult division to experiment with elective courses of study. In place of the four organized classes *six elective* courses were offered: two in direct Bible study, one in the International Uniform Lessons, and three classes on social problems. All were to run for one quarter. The Sunday before the new plan was introduced the adults of the congregation were enrolled in the *church* class of *their choice*. Attendance immediately increased to one hundred, one hundred twenty-five, and one hundred fifty. Freedom in selecting the study-course in line with their need was largely responsible for this remarkable awakening of interest in the church.

After all, our main purpose in Christian education should be to teach the essentials of Christianity as a means of orienting the individual to a Christian way of life in relation to both God and fellow beings. Learning at its best should change living. It is not merely for the sake of knowledge or skill. The purpose of learning is to improve living.

¹ See next page for listing of elective studies.

Learning for life is essential to continued usefulness. One cannot cease growing spiritually without stagnation. One cannot live gloriously today simply on the religious experiences of yesterday. When growth ceases decay sets in. Therefore it is the business of the church to make available to every growing Christian a well-balanced, spiritual diet. The "Learning for Life Program" provides the church with a means of directing the work of its adult groups, such as classes, church-night groups, women's societies and brotherhoods in such a way as to insure continuous growth on the part of each participant. It does this because it is flexible and can be adapted to the needs, interests and abilities of small groups with similar needs.

In this issue of the ADULT LEADER we are offering a series of concrete suggestions for study and discussion courses for adults in the new Learning for Life program. These apply specifically to (A) The Bible, and (B) Christian Faith and Experience. The August issue will continue with suggestions in relation to (C) The Christian Family Life, (D) The Church, and (E) Social Relations. As soon as the courses are selected you may write to the nearest Baptist Book-Store and order the text of your choice. We expect shortly to publish these suggestive courses in booklet form for free distribution. Place your order with the Director now.

We do not regard the list of suggested texts of equal value, and cannot personally recommend every book in every respect. The list includes study-texts recommended by a dozen representative persons in addition to the original suggestions of the Committee on Religious Education of Adults of the International Council of Religious Education.

In contrast to the child, we believe that the adult is capable and should be expected to share in the evaluating process. Study-courses are offered for appraisal, and we reserve the right of the individual to take only what he may desire. The adult should not expect the text to agree with his own view-point in every instance. In fact, he has a right to be disappointed if it does. Adults learn by *comparing ideas* and not by continual agreement with those who see eye to eye with our views. The elective principle enables persons and groups to sift the true from the false and after careful consideration to arrive at an intelligent decision. The best way to expose error is to place it alongside truth. *But it is necessary for the student to approach the problem without bias and prejudgment if the outcome of the study is to be most valuable.*

PROBLEM APPROACH TO THE BIBLE

The International Uniform Lessons and other direct Bible-study methods approach the Scriptures directly to ascertain their teachings. Under the direction of an

adequate teacher this process should lead continually to daily applications as well as instructing the person on individual relationship to God. The *elective* plan of study reverses the approach, taking first the specific problem under consideration and going back into the Scriptures to ascertain its teachings. This latter plan has the advantage of concentrating on a particular life problem long enough to get an adequate conception of the fundamental issues involved and to collect from all parts of the Bible the teachings bearing upon the subject.

Both the direct and problem approach to the Scriptures are essential to normal Christian growth. Both types of study are recommended in alternating sequence or to be followed simultaneously at different periods of the week. The five areas of study offered in the Learning for Life program will provide a wide menu from which to select a balanced soul diet.

CHURCHES NOW USING ELECTIVE COURSES

Your Director of Adult and Social Education would like to hear from churches now conducting elective classes. Do you like the plan? Tell us about it! Persons and churches interested in introducing this plan should communicate directly with your own state director of religious education for specific assistance and suggestions.

Study and Discussion Courses for Adults and Young Adults

"LEARNING FOR LIFE"

Issued in Connection with the Study Program of the Adult and Social Education Divisions of The American Baptist Publication Society

This list of study-courses and texts will enable adult and young adult groups to make selection on the basis of specific needs and desires. Many of these texts are well adapted for use by young people also.

Care should be exercised in the choice of a text, and the final selection should be made with a knowledge of the view-point presented and the conclusions to which the book may lead.

NOTE. With the exception of texts otherwise indicated, the courses listed below are suited to a quarter's study (or its equivalent of thirteen periods) and are evaluated as one unit in the "Learning for Life" program.

The texts marked with (*) are the briefer and less difficult; those marked with (**) are more thorough and are intended for groups willing to do earnest study. They are all, however, within the range of the average class. Books marked with (***) present a more advanced treatment and correspond favorably to the college level. The key initials in parenthesis refer to the name of the publisher. This index will appear in the August number.

Group A—Bible

A1. GENERAL—OUR BIBLE

- * EXPLORING THE BIBLE. E. G. Hoff. (E.) 25 cents.

Twelve lessons outlining the structure and content of the Bible, including the Gospel portrait of Jesus, and suggestive ways of interpreting and using the Bible today. A Learning for Life course.

- *** THE STORY OF THE BIBLE. E. J. Goodspeed. (U. of C.) \$1.50.

A splendid summary of each book in the Old and New Testament with ample Scripture references. A bird's-eye view of the Bible with suggestions for study.

- ** THE BIBLE LOOKS YOU OVER. A. S. Phelps. (J. P.) \$1.50.

Bible teaching related to personality, home and family life, vocations, intellectual culture, neighborliness, church life and private devotional development.

- * EXPLORING THE BIBLE. E. G. Hoff. (E.) 25 cents.

An introductory course to lead to a general understanding of the Bible, what it is, how it has come to be, how to use it. Scholarly yet simple.

- * THE LIFE STORY OF THE BIBLE. F. B. Oxtoby. (W. P.) Teacher's book, 20 cents; student's book, 15 cents.

How the Bible originated; how it was preserved; what it contains in its present form. Prepared for young people, but also usable for adults.

- * HOW WE GOT OUR BIBLE. J. P. Smyth. (H.) \$1.00.

How the Bible was written and came down through the ages to us.

- *** THE BIBLE: ITS ORIGIN AND GROWTH. C. J. Harrell. (C. P.) \$1.00.

A scholarly treatment in reverent and popular style. Approved text for Leadership Education Course 120-b.

A2. THE OLD TESTAMENT; ITS CONTENT AND VALUES

- * OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY. Ira M. Price. (J. P.) Teacher's text, 25 cents; student's text, 20 cents.

The aim is to give an "airplane" view of Old Testament history. It may well be used just preceding New Testament History by Robertson. Written primarily for young people, but can be adapted to adult study.

- * OLD TESTAMENT WISDOM. Austen K. de Blois. (J. P.) Teacher's text, 25 cents; student's text, 20 cents.

Covers the Book of Proverbs in its plea for purity, honesty, courage, kindness, cheerfulness, discretion, generosity, industry, self-control and other Christian graces. Written primarily for young people, but may be adapted to adult study.

- * A SURVEY OF THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL. E. Porter. (W. P.) Teacher's book, 30 cents; student's book, 30 cents.

A rapid movement through the Old Testament, touching historical high spots in the story of the Hebrew people. Prepared for young people, but also usable for adults.

- ** THE OLD TESTAMENT, ITS STORY AND RELIGIOUS MESSAGE. W. N. Nevius. (W. P.) \$1.10.

A careful and somewhat scholarly treatment. Double unit text. Approved text for Leadership Education Course 121-b.

A3. THE NEW TESTAMENT; ITS CONTENT AND VALUES

- ** HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CHRISTIANITY AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. O. P. Eaches. (J. P.) Teacher's text, 25 cents; student's text, 20 cents.

These thirteen studies constitute a survey of the literature and history dealing with the background of Christianity and its spread through Judaism and paganism. It introduces the message of the New Testament books. Written primarily for young people, but may be adapted to adult study.

- ** NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY. A. T. Robertson. (J. P.) Teacher's text, 25 cents; student's text, 20 cents.

The aim of these thirteen studies is to give a brief survey of the life of Christianity and the history of the early church according to the New Testament. Prepared especially for young people, but well suited for adult study.

- * THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH FINDS ITSELF. T. H. Aszman. (W. P.) Teacher's book, 20 cents; student's book, 15 cents.

Thirteen lessons covering the first part of the Book of the Acts, showing how the Christian church began. Young people's elective, but also usable for adults.

- * HIS WITNESSES—STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS. A. Sledd. (C. P.) \$1.00.

Written to make the message of the Acts "more clear and cogent to the lay reader." Makes the movement and message of the book more intelligible to our times.

- * AN INTERPRETATION OF CHRISTIAN LIVING. P. H. Miller. (W. P.) Teacher's book, 20 cents; student's book, 15 cents.

A study of the Book of Philippians which presents Paul's idea of what is involved in living as a Christian. Young people's elective, but also usable for adults.

- * LIFE AND LETTERS OF PETER. G. N. Luccock. (W. P.) Student's text only, 40 cents.

Thirteen studies on the life and written messages of the impetuous apostle.

- ** THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH. P. H. Miller. (W. P.) \$1.00.

Deals with the content and message of the New Testament, emphasizing its spiritual values. Double-unit text. Approved text for Leadership Education Course 122-b.

A4. THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF JESUS

- * THE INTERPRETATION AND DEFENCE OF CHRISTIANITY. O. P. Eaches. (J. P.) Teacher's text, 25 cents; student's text, 20 cents.

A brief summary of Christ's ministry as interpreted by writings of the apostles. Prepared for young people but adaptable to adult study.

- * JESUS. Mary Ely Lyman. (A. P.) 50 cents.

An excellent summary of the life, teachings and ministry of Jesus, analyzing the thoughts and experiences of the Master and interpreting His significance in relation to history and events of today. Hazen book series.

DISCOVERING JESUS. S. A. Weston. (P. P.) Cloth, \$1.00; paper, 40 cents.

A vivid interpretation of Jesus' life with rich use of New Testament references. Prepared for young people, but also adaptable for adults. Approved text for Leadership Education Course 120-a.

THE MANHOOD OF THE MASTER. H. E. Fosdick. (A. P.) \$1.35.

Thirteen studies of Jesus' personality. Daily Scripture readings and comment, with weekly summary.

DISCIPLES IN THE SCHOOL OF JESUS. W. H. Johnson. (W. P.) Teacher's book, 20 cents; student's book, 15 cents.

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OLD TESTAMENT CHARACTER CRISES. P. W. Crannell. (J. P.) Teacher's text, 25 cents; student's text, 20 cents.

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* WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN. E. I. Bosworth. (P. P.) Cloth, 30 cents; paper, 25 cents.

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- ** **IT IS TO SHARE.** I. G. Paulsen. (M. B. C.) 50 cents.

A guide to local church education in the stewardship of possessions. Prepared especially for Methodist Episcopal churches, but equally usable by others.

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- * **GREAT MODERN CHRISTIANS.** E. Porter. (W. P.) Student's book only, 15 cents.

Brief biographical sketches of Moody, Drummond, Sheldon Jackson, Phillips Brooks, William and Catherine Booth, Frances Willard, Agger, Jane Addams, Grenfell, Schweitzer and Kagawa. Will help the student to appreciate the sources of power of these leaders and something of their life and work. Prepared for young people, but equally valuable for adults.

B7. THE CHRISTIAN USE AND OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY

- * **THE SABBATH—FOR MAN.** E. Porter. (W. P.) 15 cents. Ready January 1, 1937.

A six-session unit designed to lead to a constructive and creative attitude toward the Sabbath and its use in the light of history, Christian experience, and modern need; and a definite plan for the observance of the day as an opportunity for the spiritual renewal of the individual and the community. Half unit.

B8. CHARACTER EDUCATION

- *** **HANDBOOK ON CHARACTER EDUCATION.** R. L. Hunt. (E. S. C.)

Six practical studies from the day school point of view, presenting the aims and recommendations for teachers' procedure. Best suited to parent groups.

- CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT.** Charles Keen Taylor. John C. Winston Company, Philadelphia. 1913. 239 pages.

- CHARACTER IN HUMAN RELATIONS.** Hugh Hartshorne. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. 1932. 352 pages. \$2.50.

- EDUCATION FOR CHARACTER.** Frank Chapman Sharp. Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis. 1917. 424 pages.

- THE MAKING OF CHARACTER.** John MacCunn. Macmillan Company, New York. 1916. 258 pages.

- CHARACTER EDUCATION,** Department of Superintendence, Tenth Year-book.

- REPORT OF THE CHARACTER EDUCATION COMMISSION OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION,** Vol. 70.



Men's Bible Class,
First Baptist Church,
Westerly,
Rhode Island

This class was reorganized in 1917 from an older mixed adult class. It now has a membership of fifty-even. Its activities are many and varied. They have a careful check-up and visitation of the sick and shut-ins. They contribute liberally to missions and charity. Several times a year they conduct a layman's service of a Sunday evening. They have recently issued and circulated an interesting "Community Call to Prevailing Prayer" (an initial paragraph reads: "Pray with

a rare earnestness that the Divine Presence may attend with power all the means of grace of every church in Westerly and Pawcatuck"). This is one of the many enterprising men's classes that uses ADULT LEADER as a study-book. In the group picture, from left to right, front row: Rev. Campbell Eatough, pastor; Arthur Thompson, president; Albert G. Martin, teacher. The superintendent of the school, Arthur Riley, is in the second row, last to the right.



Estes Class,
Sanford,
Maine

(See next page)

The Estes Class, Sanford, Maine, Baptist Church

It is uncertain just how old this class is, but one of its members, Mrs. Sophia Bamford, has attended it regularly for fifty-one years. It was taught for a long time by a Miss Eva Estes, whose name it now bears—and who, incidentally, remembered it in her will. The present teacher, Mrs. Elizabeth Drowns, has officiated for the past seven years. There is an enrolment of about forty. During the past year the church parlor was refurnished by this class, and its work in remembering the sick and shut-ins has been far-reaching. The present officers are: President, Mrs. Beatrice Jackson; vice-president, Mrs. Susan Ormondroyd; secretary, Mrs. Ralph Lowell; treasurer, Mrs. Mildred Perkins. In the group picture Mrs. Jackson is first, and Mrs. Drowns fifth, from left, front row.

God Prepares a People

(Concluded from page 195)

If success is to be measured by difficulties met and mastered, Booker T. Washington was one of the most successful men of his generation. By sheer force of will he pushed his way up through ignorance and poverty, like a lily rising through the ordure of a cess-pool, and as he struggled upward he brought his race up with him.

Let us judge the Negro not by the crap-shooter, but by Booker T. Washington; the Greek not by the boot-black, but by Homer; the Italian not by the organ-grinder, but by Michelangelo; the Chinaman not by the laundryman or the opium-smoker, but by Wu Ting Fang; the Japanese not by the unassimilated truck-gardener of the Pacific States, but by Kagawa; the Britisher not by the swearing sailor, but by Gladstone.

And let us hope that America will be judged not by the gangster and kidnapper, but by George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.

RECENT BOOKS

Order All Books from The American Baptist Publication Society

CITY MAN. By Charles Hatch Sears. Harper & Brothers. 248 pages. Price, \$1.50.

Our Baptist readers will know Doctor Sears as the general secretary of the Baptist City Societies of metropolitan New York. Many years of his life have been spent in the endeavor to work out a Christian solution of the problems raised by the modern city. In this work he asks some searching questions: What is happening to the city man? What forces can be marshaled to give him stability and happiness? What contribution can the church make toward the solution of his problems?

JEHOVAH, FRIEND OF MEN. By David A. Murray. Fleming H. Revell Company. 364 pages. Price, \$2.50.

The author, who is professor of the Bible and religion in Monmouth College, Illinois, maintains that we must not let our interest in critical matters blind us to the religious message of the Old Testament. His book is an attempt to restate the Old Testament narrative and to point out its religious significance for today.

OUR FAITH. By Emil Brunner. Charles Scribner's Sons. 153 pages. Price, \$1.75.

The writings of Professor Brunner, of the University of Zurich, are fast becoming as well known in America as in Europe. The present volume was written with the lay reader in mind, and its statements are simple and direct. The thirty-five chapters survey the entire field of Christian theology as affirmed in the Protestant Reformation and now reaffirmed by the growing school of European theologians, with which Christian leaders should familiarize themselves.

A FRIENDLY GUIDE TO SUNLIT PATHS. By E. H. Gillet. Third edition, revised. The Judson Press. 47 pages. Price, 20 cents.

In response to numerous requests from pastors and church school teachers for a booklet that could be used to prepare boys and girls for church-membership this "Guide" was written by a man who has spent a lifetime in the pastorate. His ministry in Iowa, Idaho, and Washington has been richly blessed, especially with children and young people. From his experience in leading hundreds of these younger members of his congregation to understand and accept the Christian way of life the author has presented answers to many of the questions they have asked him. The material sets forth clearly and concisely the teaching of Scripture as to these inquiries. The two former editions were used extensively by pastors with classes in preparation for church-membership, and as a course in vacation church schools.

Lesson Topics for August

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|------------|---|
| August 1. | GOD LEADS A PEOPLE. Exod. 13:17 to 15:21. |
| August 8. | GOD FEEDS A PEOPLE. Exod. 16:1 to 17:7. |
| August 15. | GOD GIVES LAWS TO A NATION. Exod. 19:1 to 20:21. |
| August 22. | THE PLACE OF RELIGION IN A NATION'S LIFE. Exod. 25:1-40; 29:43-46; 40:1-38. |
| August 29. | GOD CONDEMNS INTemperance. (<i>The Social Approach to the Drink Problem.</i>) Lev. 10:1, 2, 8-11; Prov. 31:4, 5; Isa. 28:1-8; Rom. 14:21. |

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS IMPROVED UNIFORM SERIES

THIRD QUARTER, 1937: GOD IN THE MAKING OF A NATION

AIM. To encourage the student to find and appreciate God's part in the making of a nation as set forth in the history of the Era of Moses; to make clear the people's duty and privilege of recognizing God and cooperating with him in the life of their nation, in order that the student may see and perform his part as a Christian citizen

These lessons are developed from outlines prepared by the Committee on Improved Uniform Lessons of the International Council. The outlines are copyrighted, 1935, by the International Council of Religious Education and are used by permission

LESSON I. JULY 4. GOD CARES WHEN A PEOPLE SUFFERS

Exod. 1: 1-22; 2: 23-25. (Verses printed, Exod. 1: 6-14; 2: 23-25)

GENERAL THEME: GOD HEARS A PEOPLE'S CRY

Prepared by MITCHELL BRONK, D.D.

Devotional Reading for the Opening Service: Psalm 42: 1-5

KEY VERSE: Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.—Isa. 65: 24

1: 6 And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.

7 And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

8 Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.

9 And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we:

10 Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land.

11 Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raameses.

12 But the more they afflicted them,

the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel.

13 And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour:

14 And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.

2: 23 And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.

24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

25 And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.

actual beginnings of the nation and their national church. Genesis is largely a story of individuals—Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph—and of a single family. In Exodus we go on to the history of a whole people, the children of Israel, the Israelites (they are first thus spoken of in 1: 7).

In the ancient Jewish church, and even in the time of Christ, the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) was often called "the book of Moses" (Mark 12: 26). The beginning and end of Exodus are well placed: the close of the patriarchal age—with the death of Jacob—and the final establishment of the tabernacle as the earthly abode of their Lord God.

"Exodus covers a period of two hundred and fifteen years. Its keywords are: Redemption by Blood, A Redeemed People, and Deliverance by Power" (Martin Anstey). Driver makes the following general divisions:

1. Chapters I-XI, Events leading to the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt.

2. XII-XVIII, The departure from Egypt and the Exodus journey as far as Rephidim.

3. XIX-XL, Israel at Sinai.

The Lesson Before Us

I. INCREASE

Goshen, the land that had been assigned to the Hebrews (Gen. 47: 6), though not suited to agriculture, was good grazing country. It comprised about a hundred square miles—the north-eastern corner of Egypt. Here the descendants of Jacob will have retained much of their pastoral simplicity and purity of life. The consciousness that they were God's people never went lost. It is not strange, then, that they prospered and increased (1: 7).

The Israelites have always prided themselves on their faithful observance of the divine command to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1: 28). It is a boast of

A Bible Message for Every Day

Monday. A People Oppressed. Exod. 1: 6-14. Yet even that bondage God dispensed to their advantage: it knit them together into a nation. God is always working things out for good to those who love him.

Tuesday. A Cry of Distress. Ps. 94: 1-4. Our faith in God is also a faith in his justice; so, not for revenge, but for deliverance we rely upon him.

Wednesday. A Prayer in Affliction. Ps. 142: 1-7. Our prayers make plainer to us our need—and likewise our loneliness; "no man," only God!

Thursday. God Hears a People's Cry. Exod. 2: 23-25. We come into moods that tempt us to believe that God does not care. But his covenant with us is an everlasting covenant. Our impatience is shamed by his patience ("long-suffering").

Friday. The Bondage of Sin. Rom. 7: 15-23. What a wonderful, multitu-

dinous exodus it is, this other—with Christ Jesus as the Moses! Strange that all sin-enraptured men will not join it!

Saturday. A Prayer of Trust. Ps. 3: 1-8. There is, or should be, such a thing as Christian defiance. Luther had it when he threw his inkstand at the devil, who bothered him while he was translating the Bible.

Sunday. The Lord Delivers. Ps. 107: 1-9. There is a note of impatience in this psalm—that redeemed men do not "say so" (vs. 2); tell how marvelously they have been saved. "Oh, that men would!" (vs. 15.)

At the Threshold of the Lesson

The first ten lessons of this quarter are studies in the second book of the "Five Books," the Pentateuch. For the history of the Hebrew people and their religion, Exodus is one of the most important portions of the Old Testament. It also is a Genesis, for it recounts the

many of the psalms. In a numerous progeny they have seen God's promises to Abraham and Jacob fulfilled (Gen. 17:6; 32:12).

II. A NEW KING

The new king (1:8) is usually taken to be Ramses II, of the nineteenth dynasty. We know a great deal about this king and his long and eventful reign (1340-1273 B. C.), from extrabiblical sources. For a score of years he was warring with the Hittites, a new power that was pressing down from the north. He was a great builder, and some of his constructions survive (e. g. Pithom).

Ramses had his "Jewish problem," as many a ruler and nation have since had. It often begins in jealousy of the Jews' prosperity. (Those unfriendly to Hitler thus explain his "doings"!). Perhaps the king saw that the children of Israel were getting along better than his own subjects. Anyhow, they were foreigners. Joseph and his great services to Egypt were becoming merely a faint tradition. We recall the sentiment toward foreign-language groups here in our country during the World War.

Ramses may have thought to see a real danger to his kingdom in the presence of such a large foreign population. The marginal reading of verse 9, in R. V., suggests this: "too many and too mighty for us." In case of another war with the Hittites, or with the Babylonians, thought the king, it will be risky to have such a host of aliens there on the border—Goshen adjoined the isthmus of Suez; they might join themselves to the enemy, against us Egyptians—for whom they have no great love! Moffatt has "Let us handle them carefully" for "deal wisely" in verse 10.

III. OPPRESSION

*The king's first plan was to lessen their numbers and deaden their spirits by excessive toil; "made their lives bitter" (vs. 11, Moffatt), "to oppress them with heavy labor" (Meek). Meek has "gang-foremen" for "taskmasters." The Greek philosopher and economist Aristotle tells us that it was a common practice of Oriental and Egyptian tyrants to use the *corvée*, forced labor, to crush their subjects. Solomon and Rehoboam tried to introduce it in Judea. How hateful it was to the people is shown by their murder of Adoram (1 Kings 12:18).*

Pithom and Raamses (vs. 11) are described as "treasure cities," but a more correct term is used in 1 Kings 9:19, "cities of store." They would contain huge granaries—Joseph had taught the Egyptians providence with their grain crops—and arsenals of military supplies that might be needed here on the eastern border of the realm.

It is possible that these cities were also of the nature of fortifications. Remains show that Pithom was surrounded by a brick wall several yards thick. It had

*its name (in Egyptian, *pa-Tum*) for the fact that it contained a temple of Tum, god of the setting sun.*

*We may suppose that the Hebrews had to make the bricks that they used in building out of thick Nile mud, and then carry them long distances. It would be an endless, painful strain of muscle, and sweat of brow. The women will likewise have been forced to it! Thereto was added rigorous field labor, say the digging of ditches for irrigation; and the manipulation of the *shadufs*, or buckets, by which the water was forced from one level to another—just as today in Egypt. These various body-racking forms of labor are depicted in many Egyptian drawings and inscriptions that have come down to us. Israel was now indeed in bondage!*

IV. "AND YET"

And yet under such hard bondage the Hebrews thrived—at least numerically. "The more they were crushed the more they multiplied, till the Egyptians dreaded the Israelites" (vs. 12, Moffatt). It has always been thus with the oppression of God's people: you trample them into the ground and they rise up mightily increased; you slay them and their blood becomes manifold seed. "He (Pharaoh) attempted the impossible through ignorance of God's promises and God's power. Pharaoh made the greatest mistake a man can make, he left God out of his calculations" (G. Campbell Morgan). The Hebrews were God's people; and he is always keeping guard above his own.

Practical Questions for Class Discussion

- ¶ In the application of this lesson do not fail to hold prominently in mind the bondage of sin—in general—in which so many of our fellows are holden.
- ¶ Then the slavery of this or that bad habit, which may be damaging the life, separating from God.
- ¶ The bondage of narrow-mindedness, of prejudice, of obsession. These things curtail or destroy friendships, embitter life.
- ¶ It may be the bondage of circumstance.

We are shut in, by bodily infirmity or tied to a self-denying, narrow home life—in the care for someone dear to and dependent upon us.

- ¶ It belongs to the salvation of Christ to deliver us from any such bondage: "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).
- ¶ This deliverance, however, is not always in our way, not always direct and immediate. Remember the Exodus.
- ¶ Consider also the various forms of social and political bondage that enslave nations and groups. Especially just now, freedom, human rights, soul liberty, democracy, are being seriously threatened. How may we so apply Christ's salvation as to save them?
- ¶ The analogy of Egyptian bondage to Moses, the Exodus was much in men's minds in the emancipation of the Negro slavery. The faith that carried that movement through is expressed in our "Adult Topic," "God cares when a people suffers."

Notes and Comments

"The subject races were never given into our hands to supplant them, as we have supplanted the Red Indian and the New Zealander, nor to debauch, as men say we are corrupting the African and the Hindoo; but to raise, instruct and Christianize."—Marcus Dods.

"This hard bondage, while it was bitter for the Hebrews, was also a means of blessing them. The work of building these treasure cities taught them (shepherds) the mechanic arts. . . In building treasure cities for the Pharaoh they were learning to construct tabernacles, temples and cities of their own. . . In all the discipline through which he leads us he has some better thing in store for us."—Snowden.

"I despise any attempt to soften the horrors of these Depression days. Their results are terrible beyond words. But of this I am certain—thousands of lives are going to come through like gold from the refiner's fire, with character strengthened and values made clear in the testing."—Frank B. Fagerburg.

TEACHERS' HELPS

In the Men's Class

Charles C. Stillman,¹ Columbus, Ohio

GOD HEARS A PEOPLE'S CRY

Joseph died. The king died. Then things began to happen. Strong personalities shape the destinies of nations.

¹ Professor Stillman is director of the School of Social Administration in Ohio State University. He is the author of *Social Work Publicity*.

Look at Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin. Trip along through history and pause on the battlefield with Alexander the Great. Stop in the tent of Genghis Khan, who overran Asia. Calm down and listen to Socrates. Roar through Europe with Napoleon. Consider Florence Nightingale and thank God for the nurse. Let your blood tingle as you read of Louis Pasteur and his contribution to prophylactics. Who can measure the power of a life?

The magazine *Fortune* for February carries an article on "Political Realignment." It discusses opposite opinions, as held by Hamilton Fish and Laurens Hamilton, about the future course of the Republican party. As to this comment, I am here interested only in the appraisal of one man's personality, as made by the author of the article. He says:

"Representative Fish's error springs from the assumption that Mr. Roosevelt ran as a liberal and was elected as a liberal in a campaign in which liberalism was the issue. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Mr. Roosevelt ran as Mr. Roosevelt, and was elected as Mr. Roosevelt, in a campaign in which Mr. Roosevelt was the issue. The two things are not the same."

To some people Mr. Roosevelt's influence is good, to others it seems to be bad. To all he is the man of the hour. Why? Because of three things: himself as a personality; the position of trust he holds; the exigent circumstances in which our country is placed. We all agree that if a less forceful personality or a man with far different economic philosophy were in the presidential chair the course of government might run differently.

Lester F. Ward has called our attention to "the carnival of desires that are held inside of every human being." Mussolini is quoted as saying that democracy is doomed, which is a way of glorifying dictatorship. We can say for democracy that it is seldom without interest, excitement, uncertainty, change. The attempt to give concrete expression to the melange of desires, ambitions, virtues and vices of a diversified electorate will always be kaleidoscopic in its effects. What do we want? Will God hear the majority or the minority? *The Survey*, of New York, quotes Prof. Robert McElroy, Oxford University, as saying: "The woes of the world are not due to irremovable economic forces. They are due to removable politicians—Republicans, Democrats, Socialists, Bolsheviks, Fascists, Nazis." Your own faith must answer the question as to whether God is on the side of the strongest battalions or on the side of the righteous.

Things were bad for the children of Israel. Their lives were "bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field." By official orders, Hebrew midwives were directed to kill all new-born males. It was about this time, you will remember, that the babe Moses was hid in a waterproof basket in the reeds at the river's edge. In their extremity they called to God—"And God took knowledge of them."

A generation ago in this country it was common to hear patriotic addresses and sermons stressing the notion that America was safe, would continue to be safe, and no serious harm would come to her because she was in a peculiar way

under the watch-care of God. That notion has given way to one of apprehension and fear for our land.

The press accounts of the conference that led to a settlement of the strike in the automotive industry reported that Mr. Lewis said to a representative of General Motors, "Well, the whole thing boils down to this—I am out to do you, and you are out to do me." The remark was not complimentary to the C. I. O., headed by Mr. Lewis. The answer of the representative of General Motors was not complimentary to that corporation—"That is right, Mr. Lewis." When we are out to "do" each other progress will be slow.

The Christian religion, as founded by Jesus, is not primarily one of social welfare. A man, however, cannot love his neighbor as an individual and go out and skin his fellowmen by the handful. The Christian religion, as logically developed by leaders in all our denominations, is putting emphasis upon social welfare. Why is it a logical development? Because Jesus' test of discipleship is service, and all through his teaching there are connotations of spiritual force and fervor expressing themselves in such service. Many years ago Professor Peabody developed that thought in his *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*.

God hears a people's cry when the people are penitent.

Before My Class of Women

Colena Michael Anderson,¹
McMinnville, Oregon

"How can God let such suffering go on?" "How can a loving God allow one man to do such brutal things to another?" "How can God look on and see a little boy snatched from home and murdered?" "Don't tell me God cares. If he did he would see to it that there were no epidemics of disease, no more terrible accidents, no more wars."

How familiar these questions and statements are! We have heard other people say just these words. At times we ourselves have been tempted to say them. On the surface all tragedies make us think that God does not care.

As I review the times and circumstances when I have been tempted to make remarks like the above I find that most of those times have one common denominator. I am tempted in this direction only when I think of the suffering of others, not when I face my own. In my own hours of pain and sorrow I have always found myself sustained by the "everlasting arms." In the darkest hours of my life I have not felt myself

cut off from God's loving care. At times I have even said, "Now I know what Paul meant when he declared, 'For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord'" (Rom. 8: 38, 39).

Of course I realize that compared with the sufferings and sorrows of others mine have been insignificant. True, I have known accidents. Once I made a car turn a somersault with five girls and myself in it. Once my own daughter was knocked down by a car. Recently my husband challenged a bridge—but all of us survived. Only to the circle of relatives outside my intimate family and to the circle of friends have accidents ended in death.

Sickness? Yes, of course. One cannot have three children without being intimately acquainted with many of the prevalent diseases; and if one chooses China for her children's birthplace, several more! Once we all but lost our daughter through an illness there that she would not have known in America. I myself am intimately acquainted with hospital procedure—half-way around the world.

Death? That, too. One does not reach middle age without knowing death. First the dear grandparents, then a beloved father, and a husband's mother; and all through the years one friend after another.

Yes, I have known accidents, sickness and death, but not such as some have known. That is why I say that compared with the dark hours of others mine seem light. And maybe that is why none of them has forced me to say, "God does not care." None of them has permanently blinded me to a faith in God's purpose running through all my life. True, this purpose has not always been immediately perceived. Only recently has one of the disappointments of my life taken its place in the "great parade"—as Lloyd Douglas calls it in his *Green Light*.

But now—back of the "common denominator" of which I spoke at the beginning. Analyze the times that you, too, have heard the expression, "God does not care." Is it not usually said when the speaker is thinking of others' sufferings? Is it not true that we seldom hear the sufferers themselves say this? They seem to have the strength to endure. Tradition tells us that Peter, at the hour of his crucifixion, said, "Not as my Master was crucified. Crucify me with my head down."

John Hus at the stake did not think God had no care for him. He said, when for the last time he was urged to recant: "God is my witness that I have never taught or preached that which false witnesses have testified against me. He knows that the great object of all my

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preaching and writing was to convert men from sin. In the truth of that gospel which hitherto I have written, taught, and preached, I now joyfully die."

From many a battlefield echo the heroic words of generals and privates: "I'm all right." "Don't let them know that their general is dying." "Tell mother all is well."

A few months ago the father of a little lad whose kidnaping and murder shocked the nation sent out a statement that it was better that tragedy had come to him and his family than to some others. They had a faith in God's purpose which others may not have had, a faith that gave them strength through their days of heavy trial.

For all men and women like those parents our hearts cry out, "How could God let them suffer so!" From the saintly heroes of all the ages comes the cry, "If only I had another life to give!" In the hour of their suffering they knew God cared for them.

This, then, is what I mean—looking at disaster *en masse* from the outside we say, "God does not care." Looking at it from the inside we become clear-visioned and say, "We know that he cares. As our day so shall our strength be." I pray that you and I may always have Paul's confidence "that all things work together for good to them that love God."

The Lesson Illustrated

WHERE MEN ARE FASHIONED

Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them (Exod. 1:11). Earth is the place where men are fashioned for eternity. A piano-factory is not the place to go in order to hear music. Suppose a man were to start for some great piano-manufactory with the expectation of being enchanted while there by innumerable Thalbergs. . . We are in the workshop of humanity. We see evidences of this, turn which way we will. . . Evidences are numerous of a design of *pounding* us. We must feel the mallet and the saw; the punch and the bore. We must be split, and ground, and worked smooth. The pumice and the sandpaper are for us also, as well as for the things we fashion; and at last, when we are all set together, polished, and attuned, we shall be played upon by the music-waking influences of heaven.—*H. W. Beecher.*

GOD HEARS

And God heard their groanings (Exod. 2:24). A city hospital, recently enlarged and equipped with all the latest and most-approved appliances, was thrown open to the inspection of visitors. A physician connected with it explained the various improvements, and among

others the way in which patients could summon attendants. By the old method a button beside the bed rang a bell, but it was possible for the bell to go unheard or at least unheeded. The sound of the bell was also confusing. "But now," said the physician, "a patient too weak to lift his arm may touch a button just at hand, and instantly four lights flash out—one in the office, one in the great hall, the two others in different parts of the building; and it is impossible for anyone to turn them out until the call has been answered." Shall human skill and pity compass such things as these, and we yet question whether the Creator of all worlds has any system by which He can hear the cry of his children in need?

THE BRIDGE

"*His covenant. . .*" (Exod. 2:24).

My attention was attracted by an arm which I watched carrying a long straw. It came to a crack in the rock, which was like a precipice to the tiny creature. After attempting to take its burden across in several ways, the ant got to one end of the straw and pushed it in front of him over the crack till it reached to the other side, crossed over on the straw, and then pulled it after him. There is no burden you and I carry faithfully but some day is going to become a bridge to carry us.—*Wm. Jago.*

LESSON II. JULY 11. HOW GOD PROVIDES LEADERS TODAY

Exod. 2: 1-22; 3: 1-12. (Verses printed, Exod. 3: 1-12)

GENERAL THEME: GOD PROVIDES A LEADER

[This lesson written by HILLYER H. STRATON, Th. D., Muncie, Indiana]

Devotional Reading for the Opening Service: Psalm 2: 1-8

KEY VERSE: "Come now therefore and I will send thee."—Exod. 3: 10

1 Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.

2 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

4 And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

6 Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

7 And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which

are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

9 Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.

10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

11 And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?

12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

A Bible Message for Every Day

Monday. God Saves a Life. Exod. 2: 1-10. The recent excavations by Professor Garstang at Jericho have definitely placed its capture by the Hebrews at approximately 1400 B. C. This makes probable that Princess Hatshepsut of Egypt (1501-1487 B. C.) discovered and saved the life of the infant Moses. We know that she was a strong-willed princess, who would be likely to have her own way.

Tuesday. God Provides a Leader. Exod. 3: 1-12. Carlyle believed that man makes history. Moses has probably altered the course of human history to a larger extent than any other man who ever lived. When the Hebrews needed a leader, God provided him. God always provides the man for the age.

Wednesday. Accepting the Task. Heb. 11: 23-27. The choice for God often means affliction and trial, but "as I was with Moses so will I be with thee." Moses gave up the pleasures of the palace, but his service for God will mean blessings for humanity as long as there are men on earth.

Thursday. God Calls Joshua. Joshua 1:1-9. There was only one Moses; he alone could have done his task. God called Joshua not to do Moses' work, but his own. No other man could have done it quite so well.

Friday. God Calls Gideon. Judg. 6:1-18. Gideon was puzzled because there were no miracles in his day. He knew that God had wrought wonderously by the hand of Moses. When Gideon was willing to obey God, he discovered that the God of Moses was also the God of Gideon. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is merely waiting for his children to obey him.

Saturday. God Calls Paul. Acts 9:1-19. Paul was a man who resisted the will of God until the terrific experience on the Damascus Road. When finally convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, his first words were, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The first thing a good Christian wants to know is how he can be of service.

Sunday. "The Reign of the Righteous King." Ps. 72:1-17. It is a truly wonderful thing to be called into the service of the King of kings. His reign will be one of personal, social, economic and political righteousness. When we serve Christ, we will bring in his Kingdom.

At the Threshold of the Lesson

Why the enslavement of the Hebrews? Jacob and his family had come to Egypt with so much of hope. Joseph was prime minister and the whole family was honored. We know now that the Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings, ruled Egypt at this time, and they would naturally be friendly to nomads such as the Jacob clan. But "a king arose who knew not Joseph." The Hyksos were finally overthrown by a native Egyptian leader and the former friends of the ruling class were now enslaved.

God had promised Canaan to Abraham—but what about the inhabitants? The Canaanites were there first, and even God could not put them out without just cause. Genesis 15:16 gives us the reason: "The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." In other words, the inhabitants of Canaan had not as yet sinned away their day of grace.

The Hebrews had to wait in Egypt until the Amorites no longer had a right to the land, because of their sin. God would then justly give it to the Hebrews. *Egyptian bondage not without its blessing.* Up until this time the Hebrews were a nomadic people who had little contact with civilization. In Egypt they were in the midst of the most highly civilized of ancient peoples. Their very slavery was a liberal education.

"Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22). Moses, the great emancipator, was the one who welded the Hebrews into a nation. Egypt was not only an education for the Hebrew people, but it was also

the finest possible training for the man who was destined to lead them from bondage. Only a man educated to the degree of Moses could have given the code of laws that we find associated with his name. In all probability he was acquainted with the famous code of Hammurabi. No man in all of ancient times was so well prepared as Moses to give the code of laws that we have in the Pentateuch, the "Five Books."

The Lesson Before Us

I. GOD AT SINAI. Exod. 3:1-15

Moses started life in the palace of a great princess. There he had all of the advantages that came to those of royal blood. He was educated, cultured, and his position in life assured. But, as Hebrews 11:25 tells us, he chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater than the treasures of Egypt."

When Moses saw the injustice that was done to one of his own kinsmen, his blood ran hot and he struck a blow in defense of justice. He had to flee, not because he had killed a man—an Egyptian prince could kill with impunity—but because he had sided with the slaves.

It is significant that Moses fled to the Sinaitic peninsula. There he joined the Midianites, of whom the Kenites were a branch. The Midianites traced their descent back to Abraham through Keturah (Gen. 25:2), so they were distant relatives of Moses. While in the desert he married the daughter of Jethro, a priest of Midian, and for a long period of years led the life of a nomadic shepherd.

This part of his education was as essential as the court training; for he could never have led the Hebrews successfully through this very country had he been without experience in the field. In the country about Sinai Moses learned to commune with God.

For the most vivid description in all literature of this very country, read T. E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. In your mind you can march with Moses from one watering-place to the next. Lawrence even experienced a plague of snakes almost as serious as did the Hebrews. Could it have been in the same valley?

At Horeb-Sinai. Horeb is the chain, Sinai the mountain. According to Peritz, "What Moses experienced among the Kenites was a revival of ancestral religion, forgotten in the adverse and foreign Egyptian environment, and once more brought to the Hebrew tribes instinct with a new enthusiasm." Exodus 6:3 tells us, "I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as God Almighty (El Shaddai), but by my name Jehovah I was not known unto them." It is entirely possible that Jethro reintroduced Moses to monotheistic worship.

Moses saw a bush burning—and still it was not consumed. When he went to investigate he heard a voice that told him to remove his shoes, for he was upon holy ground. Some have thought that the burning bush was emblematic of the Israelitish oppression in Egypt—they were oppressed by bloody persecution, yet continued to grow numerous. The reason for their thriving condition was that "God was in the midst of them."

God appeared to Moses in the burning bush. Eight hundred years later Elijah in this same locality expected God to appear in an earthquake, in thunder, in lightning, but instead he appeared in a "still small voice."

II. GOD KEEPS HIS COVENANT Exod. 3:6-9

The name for God, whether it is Dieu, Jehovah, Dios, or Gott, is not so important as our understanding of his character. Though Abraham knew him as Elohim, he was the same God that was speaking to Moses, the one and true God, the Creator of the universe.

God had given a promise to Abraham, "In thee and in thy seed shall all of the nations of the world be blessed." This was centuries later, but God had not forgotten—he never forgets. God is a living God and the God of the living—as Jesus pointed out when he quoted these very words. God had in mind the great purpose of redemption through the Hebrew peoples, and his purpose was now crystallizing by first redeeming the Hebrews from bondage. Later, God would redeem all mankind from the greater bondage of sin, through the sacrifice of Jesus, "that great prophet like unto Moses."

God tells Moses, "The cry of the children of Israel is come up unto me." The Bible is clear in teaching that all sin and all oppression are known to God, and hateful to him. To Cain God said, "Thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." God hears the prayers of those who are oppressed, and in his own time he delivers them. It has well been said that "our impotency is God's opportunity." Out of their dire extremity the Israelites cried unto God and he raised up for them a deliverer.

III. GOD DELIVERS, BUT BY MEANS OF MAN. Exod. 3:10, 11

Whenever God has wanted a task done among men, he has always called upon a man to do it. Stradivarius said, "Even God cannot make a Stradivarius violin without Stradivarius." It can be said reverently, but it is none the less true, that God could not lead the Israelites out of bondage apart from Moses. If men are not willing to be used of God, his work must wait until a man is found who is willing. The great work of redemption had to wait until there was a Man willing to say "Not my will but thine be done."

God was ready to give Moses every assistance, but God had to use a human instrumentality. We are told in another passage that Moses was a meek man. His natural reticence comes out here, and he gave a number of reasons why he was not the man to do this great task. A sufficient answer was found to each objection. Moses felt his incompetence. He well knew the strength of the Pharaoh's will and the size of his army, and he recognized the magnitude of his task. It was far easier to watch the flocks of his father-in-law.

From the moment of Moses' decision to go back to Egypt until the day of his death he could scarcely call a minute his own. His life was filled with decisions, with problems, with heartache, but there was the joy of doing a great task for God. The fellowship with God was worth every sacrifice.

IV. GOD'S PRESENCE ASSURES VICTORY. *Exod. 3:12*

As has been observed above, God without Moses could not have led the children of Israel out of bondage. The opposite also holds true, Moses without God could never have emancipated his people. God needs men to do his bidding on earth, but even more men need God.

God gave to Moses the power of speech, when naturally he was anything but a public speaker. God gave Moses the command of unusual power, because without it Pharaoh would never have permitted the slaves to leave Egypt. Then through the long journey in the wilderness, God was at all times with Moses. He had promised, "Certainly I will be with thee"—and God was true to his word. No matter how hard the problem, or discouraging the outlook, God was with Moses; and in the words of the Psalmist, "If God be for me, who can be against me?"

One with God is a majority, as has been well said. God called Moses to a great task, and then he backed him to

the limit. God needs leaders to carry on his Kingdom enterprises. You can be sure that after he has called you, he will back you to the limit. "As I was with Moses, so will I be with you" (*Joshua 3:7*).

Practical Questions for Class Discussion

- ¶ Has God's method of calling men into his service changed since the time of Moses?
- ¶ Can you give a specific instance of a "call" to Christian service?
- ¶ Do you think that God would be as active on behalf of his servants to-day as he was in the time of Moses?
- ¶ While recognizing that God uses so-called natural means, when possible, do you think the day of miracles has passed?
- ¶ Give some specific instance of what you feel was a direct answer to prayer.
- ¶ Considering your abilities and opportunities, does God have as important a work for you to do as he had for Moses?
- ¶ If Moses had refused to heed the call of God, would God have given the task to a man with less ability? Or would he have waited until a man of Moses' caliber was willing to be used?

Notes and Comments

Sympathy, Service. "God saw the affliction of his people, knew their sorrows, heard their cry. Moses sympathized with oppressed Israel or he never could have been their deliverer. Sympathy is good, but service must follow. Israel must be rescued from Egypt, trained in the wilderness, settled in a conquered Canaan. The great leader must be a great servant. The chosen leader obeyed the call of God."—*Hight C. Moore, in "Points for Emphasis."*

combinations of circumstances may have raised incompetents to high positions. All leaders were noble, good and unselfish, the old world would be on the way to glory. Unfortunately, authority, leadership and nobility of character are not always found together. Wouldn't be fine if they were?"

Hornell Hart, in *The Science of Social Relations*, discusses social cooperation. He points out that the motive to be depended upon to further social cooperation is "the fact that service itself is an intensely delightful form of functioning."

He presents a telling illustration:

"This is well instanced by the behavior of Jeremiah Smith, American lawyer, economist and gentleman, Boston, who was picked by the League of Nations to put Hungary on a financial feet. When Mr. Smith came to Budapest the sky was fogged by a cloud of suspicion, and in one or two quarters deep rumblings of discontent almost of hatred, were heard. The Hungarian Government courteously offered him a suite in the magnificent Royal Palace. Commissioner General Smith declined. The government then offered him a palatial suite in the Dunapalota Hotel. Mr. Smith would have none of it, announcing privately that he would live in two small rooms at the top of the Hotel Hungaria. In two years of unassuming toil he raised Hungary from the swamp of financial catastrophe to the high, dry plains of solvency. At the end of that time he refused to accept his \$100,000 salary. 'Give it to charity,' he said; and when told that it had already appeared in the national accounts, he said, 'Then reenter it in your books as a gift from the American people to the people of Hungary.' 'At the very least they begged, 'won't you accept a decoration?' 'If you do that I shall never forgive you,' was his answer. 'Your friendship and gratitude are more precious to me than any decoration.'"

The spirit of service is unselfishness and unselfishness is the test of character. In past history and in contemporary life we can easily pick out men and women who held high trust and unselfishly revealed sturdy character in lives of noteworthy service.

You will agree with me that Moses was unselfish. It appears plainly that he turned his back upon Egyptian royalty with its very considerable opportunities and chose his own people. Moses was born a leader. Leaders are not made such unless they are potentially born such. God does his calling at the time of birth. The right kind of education does much for a man. "Experience the best teacher" is true in some cases. In Moses' case contact with God developed a consciousness of a divine mission. The stuff that was in him led him to accept the call to leadership of an oppressed people.

I like the humility of Moses; he

TEACHERS' HELPS

In the Men's Class

Charles C. Stillman, Columbus, Ohio

GOD PROVIDES A LEADER

The weak man seeks a leader. The strong man aspires to be one. Most of us are dependent and follow the leader. It is characteristic of humans that they enjoy contact with a person in authority, even though it be a remote contact such as sending a gift, framing his picture or asking for his autograph.

"To the President of the United States every day is a little bit of Christmas, and the way in which his December 25 differs from other occasions is merely in the greater number of gifts received. For all through the year presents come

rolling in. Like humanity in general, most Americans have a half-unconscious feeling that if they can but touch the hem of the garment of some great individual they are winning for themselves some little share in his greatness. To have driven over a country road where George Washington once drove, to have stood where Lincoln spoke, to have slept in a bed where General Grant slept are honors that most of our fellow citizens instinctively prize. And to have sent a turkey, or a jack-rabbit, or a pumpkin, or a cane to the head of the nation reacts with a sense of exaltation upon the donor."—*New York Times*, December 19, 1926.

Of course people in authority are not always leaders. The accident of birth or

modesty. I can appreciate his timidity. I can understand his reluctance to undertake what certainly must have looked like a foolhardy mission. Why send me to Pharaoh? What shall I say to him? I don't even know how to get past the outer guard; and if I did get into the court, I would probably be shaky in the knees and speechless. My tongue sticks in my throat as I even think about addressing Pharaoh. And look at the people of Israel. It is one thing to say that I come in your name and another thing to answer the sure-to-be-asked question, What is his name? What shall I say at that stage of the proceedings? Please! Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? I really do not think I can do it.

Service is a great motive. Self-preservation is the first law of nature, but some of us make it the second and the third also. The struggle for existence does not bother us; the reach for riches is what is the matter with us. Corporate management lusts after profits. Too many of us live double lives; we are true to family, school and church, but when we invest our money in a business undertaking we expect our representatives to make money for us, and we become very impatient about any questioning of their methods and policies. Yet down deep in our hearts we know that service has turned tail and run whenever profits have raised their collective eyebrows. We live in a tough world. Who am I to tell my boss, Pharaoh, how to run his own business? Maybe I do push my men pretty hard in my own department, but I have to make my quota, and by that time the pretty placard with "service" in gold-leaf upon it is covered with dollar-signs, quick figuring and telephone-messages. It is too bad, Lord, but I can't do it!

Before My Class of Women

Colena Michael Anderson,
McMinnville, Oregon

A few years ago, returning by automobile from the fall association meeting at Moscow, Idaho, we drove through a country aflame with autumn. I thought of that second verse in William Herbert Carruth's "Each In His Own Tongue":

A haze on the far horizon,
The infinite, tender sky,
The ripe rich tint of the corn-fields,
And the wild geese sailing high—
And all over upland and lowland
The charm of the goldenrod—
Some of us call it autumn,
And others call it God.

I thought, too, of Moses and his experience with a flaming bush. The bushes were passing looked as though they were on fire. As we sped by, certain words and phrases began grouping themselves together in my mind, and I knew I could not rest until they settled them-

selves into a pattern. There was nothing to do but to get out pencil and paper. As a keepsake of that experience my note-book now contains:

FLAMING BUSHES

Once Moses saw a flaming bush,
And heard the voice of God;
On mountainside in evening hush
He stood with feet unshod:
"Who am I that I should go, Lord
God?"

Today we see a myriad bush
Aflame in orange, red;
Had we no hundred miles to rush,
We'd pause. We pass instead,
And wonder why the voice of God is
dead.

Today we lament the lack of adequate Christian leadership. We acknowledge a leader's dependence upon God's guidance, and yet how many of us look upon God as one traveler is said to have looked upon a certain town, saying, "That's a lovely town we're coming to, wasn't it." If Moses had not stopped and turned aside to see the great sight—a bush burning with fire and yet not consumed—he would never have heard God's voice calling him, and he would never have heard God talk intimately of his own heartache at the affliction of his people in Egypt. Nor would God have been able to open the ears of Moses to the cry of those afflicted by reason of their taskmaster.

Search the biographies of our great leaders and you will find that they were men and women who at one time or another turned aside to hear God speak to them, directly calling them to leadership.

Try it for yourself. No one of us is privileged to see a burning bush that yet is not burnt, but all of us frequently have the privilege of hearing speakers who are aflame with inspiration and challenge. If we rush past their inspirations and their challenges, saying with our lips, "Fine sermon today, pastor!" the while we are saying in our hearts, "I hope the roast hasn't burned!" God can never call us to be leaders. But if we take time to turn aside to look at the inspiration, we shall hear God sharing with us his plan, pointing out his place for us in that plan. We shall be as surprised as Moses, and we shall say with him, "But, Lord, who am I that I should do this thing? Why I—I am only—" And God will interrupt and say, "But certainly I will be with thee."

This is no hypothetical theory I am offering. This is an experiment tried and proved by many. I myself have tried it. May I be personal—or perhaps I should say intimate—for I have always been quite personal in these articles. This which I wish to share with you now, though, is more than personal; it is truly intimate.

A few months ago, when the Preaching Mission was here, I had the rare privilege of sitting beside E. Stanley

Jones as he rode with us in our automobile from Portland to McMinnville—and back to Portland again. On the way I said: "Doctor Jones, you and others of this mission have stirred us. We want to make our lives count more than they have in the work of the Kingdom. But we feel so helpless; we don't know what to do. Tell us what we should do. Before the work of your mission is complete, you *must* tell us, you must set forth specific tasks, must. . ."

Then I realized that Doctor Jones was looking at me; looking very intently. I read in that quiet look his inability to tell me as an individual just what specific tasks were mine. I read in that look his unspoken words, that I must find the tasks for myself. That look was my burning bush. It caused me to say, "I will turn aside and try to understand the words that were not spoken."

When, within the next few days, I did turn aside and have my quiet time, the same thing happened to me that happened to Moses—God spoke to me, and very plainly laid before me two specific projects in my own immediate community, projects the need for which Doctor Jones did not know, direction toward which he could not give.

How does God provide leaders today? In the same way he did in Moses' day. He catches man's attention by a burning bush, a blinding light, a bruised beggar, a Negro on the auction-block, a friend's silent look—in any one of a myriad ways. If those who see pass by they miss God's voice; they remain as they were; if, however, they turn aside—ah, who then can predict what God will have to say to them, what he will make of them!

The Lesson Illustrated

"HERE AM I"

God called unto him out of the midst of the bush (Exod. 3:4).

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland resolved to cast lots to discover whether God would thus select any minister to be relieved from his home charge who might be designated as a missionary to the South Seas. Each member of the Synod agreed to hand in three names. In an atmosphere of hushed solemnity the names were handed in and were scrutinized by the committee. When the committee reported, it was learned that the vote was indecisive. Sitting in the congregation was a young minister of Glasgow, who followed the discussion and the vote with deep interest. When the result was announced, tears blinded his eyes, and he felt that the Lord was saying to him, "Since none better qualified can be got, rise and offer yourself." Almost overpowering was the impulse to answer aloud, "Here am I, send me." The young minister was John G. Paton, who later went out to the New Hebrides and whose autobiography is perhaps the best-loved story of missionary adventure we have.—*Selected.*

LESSON III. JULY 18. STRONG IN THE STRENGTH OF GOD

Exod. 3:13 to 6:1. (Verses printed, Exod. 3:13-16; 4:10-16; 5:1)

GENERAL THEME: GOD ENCOURAGES A LEADER

Prepared by MITCHELL BRONK, D.D.

Devotional Reading for the Opening Service: Isaiah 6:1-8

KEY VERSE: The Lord will give strength unto his people.—Ps. 29:11

3:13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

16 Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt.

4:10 And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

11 And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?

12 Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.

13 And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.

14 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.

15 And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do.

16 And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.

5:1 And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.

but in the ability to get things done, directing their doing. It is thus with God.

The Lesson Before Us

I. MOSES' CREDENTIALS. 3:13-16

Moses shrinks from the stupendous mission to which God calls him; as we he might; as many another great servant of God has. Who am I that should do it? Why do you choose me of all men, a man who has had to flee for his life from Egypt?

God's reassurance is the one that He always gives to his hesitant and fearful servants: "I will be with thee" (3:12). Those words should make the humblest and faintest-hearted man daring and courageous. We remember that they were Paul's "backing" when he faced impossible tasks and when he was about to brave the Roman Pharaoh. (Acts 27:24. Comp. also Deut. 31:23.)

Written over a verse of one of our most-prized hymns, they have strengthened millions of Christian hearts:

"I, I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;

I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,

Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand."

God couldn't give Moses this promise of his support in the great enterprise if he hadn't been fitted for the task. It is our capabilities, gifts, preparation—which we indeed oftener than not overlook or depreciate—plus God's presence with us that enable us to do great things.

His credentials to his people was to be a very simple one: the name of the God. Moses asks pointblank the name of the Divine One. The answer is twofold: In verse 15 God names himself "the God of your fathers." The first part of the answer, however, is more difficult of explanation, and various interpretations have been given to the language here.

Some have thought that God's reply is ambiguous, or, that he refuses to be named: "I am that I am." But evidently a real designation is meant here: the word rendered "I am," "the Being One," "the One who always has been and ever will be," "the Eternal." This name has perhaps more of a future than a present or past signification. So it is full of promise, almost equivalent to that "I will be with thee." Moffatt translates: "Tell the Israelites that I-will-be has sent you to them."

This word "I am" was the Hebrew personal name for God. It is older than Moses. Its suggested equivalent in English

A Bible Message for Every Day

Monday. The Call of Moses. Exod. 3:13-17. We all hear, constantly, and plainly, calls to Christian service; the trouble is we, like Moses, try to excuse ourselves out of the task that God wants us to perform.

Tuesday. Moses Encouraged. Exod. 4:1-9. We may shrink from answering the call of God through humility. It was not only fearfulness, but also a sense of his inadequacy for the great task, that held him back. Our humility may become our strength.

Wednesday. The Promise of God's Help. Exod. 10:10-17. The Lord of the Old Testament was always saying to his faithful, as Paul's Christ said to him—and says to us—"My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. 12:9).

Thursday. The Promise of God's Presence. Acts 18:5-11. And this other word to Paul, "For I am with thee," to how many thousands of discouraged, doubting, hesitating Christian workers has it brought reassurance!

Friday. The Promise of Victory. John 16:25-33. To share with Christ in the victory, however, we must share with him in the tremendous task of overcoming the world (vs. 33).

Saturday. Fearless Trust in God. Ps. 27:7-14. To the ancient Hebrew to be forsaken by father and mother was

the limit. The Psalmist knows that God's care and love go beyond that.

Sunday. The Abiding Presence. Matt. 28:16-20. I like the rendering of the Vulgate in the last verse, for "always": *all the days* of the week, of the month, of the year, of always.

At the Threshold of the Lesson

God is foresighted. When the great undertaking is ripe for accomplishment he has his man, his agent, all ready and prepared. In our last lesson we considered certain phases of this preparation in the case of Moses: his Hebrew home and mother, and Egypt. The Midianite years were also important. Moses' shepherd life among this people brought him many opportunities for solitary meditation, sometimes in scenes of awe-inspiring nature. "The man for the hour was now ready. It took years to make him; he was worth it!"

"I will send thee" (3:10). God does not go, he sends: his angels, his messengers, his prophets, his Son. He does not act directly, but through the mediation of his servants, that is, his people, you and me. Jesus talked about his stewards; there is his Great Commission, "Go ye!" His disciples are apostles, missionaries, both of which words mean, etymologically, "ones sent." Efficiency consists not in the ability to do things,

lish is *Y(J)ahveh*. We have lost the vowels and therefore the pronunciation of the word, because the Jews of a later time thought it too sacrosanct to be spoken. *Yahveh* has some warrant in the usage of the modern Samaritans, who never shared the orthodox Jewish scruples in regard to speaking the name. The Greek Old Testament usually renders it "Lord," which was adopted by our A. V. *Jehovah* is a modern (dating from A. D. 1518) and hybrid form of the word. Moffatt has chosen "the Eternal," which is literal and expressive. Yet in our opinion *Jehovah*, because of its association with the familiar English Bible and because it is a round, devout-sounding word, is as good a substitute for this hypothetical *Yahveh* as can be found. It should again be noticed that the ancient Israelites attached great significance to names, and consequently the divine name had for them a sacredness that we can hardly understand. Yet names always count.

II. THE MODESTY OF MOSES. 4:10-16

It was both praiseworthy and reprehensible. Self-distrust and self-confidence have been mingled in most of the world's outstanding characters. Moses' chief fault was rather his lack of faith in God's reassurances. "He looks at himself instead of looking at the infinite God. Am, at his own insufficiency" (Torrey). This is what provokes God (4:14).

He knows himself to be an indifferent spokesman, and it would take a lot of eloquence to win Pharaoh's permission for his people's release. The divine argument is: May not the maker of the mouth make the mouth eloquent, fill it with persuasive words? Now therefore, O, Moses! I will not only be with thee, giving thee courage to face great dangers, strengthening thy heart and stiffening thy knees in his presence, but I will also be with that mouth of thine.

There is any amount of psychology and common sense in this divine encouragement. Paul also was a poor speaker who preached western Asia and southern Europe into the church of Christ. Caedmon, first Anglo-Saxon poet, was the only man of his master's hall who positively could not make verses—until the vision stirred him to do it. Time and time again we have seen tongue-tied, bashful men and women transformed into powerful and blessed speakers of the gospel and Christian experience by accepting God's promise that he would "be with their mouth."

"Nearest the throne itself must be
The footstool of humility"

(Montgomery).

"Humility is to make a right estimate of one's self. The higher a man is in place, the lower he will be in his own esteem" (Spurgeon).

Practical Questions for Class Discussion

- ¶ What names for God can you think of that are used in the Bible? And what does each one of them mean to you?
- ¶ What are the Christian worker's credentials?
- ¶ Is it not a fact that Moses was the best-prepared man of all the Israelites for this service, this leadership? And yet he didn't think so!
- ¶ Every pastor and church leader is troubled by the holding back and the making of excuses on the part of church-members. Is this due to what we might call religious inferiority complex, to lack of faith, or to sheer laziness?
- ¶ Moses can't imagine himself big enough for the job. But God knows. In church and Sunday school work people are continually saying, "But I couldn't," in answer to God's "I will send thee." Willingness is two-thirds of the battle; if one makes a beginning the chances almost certainly are that a successful end will be reached. Moses' career tells us this.
- ¶ God can use us, provided we are usable—and we must see to it that we are—and fitted for the task. There's a big and important mission for every single one of us in Christ's kingdom.

Notes and Comments

"The overruled reluctance of Moses, and the inflexible urgency of his commission, may teach us the honor set by God upon humanity. He has knit men together in the mutual dependence of nations and families, that each may be his minister to all; and in every great crisis of history he has respected his own principle, and has visited the race by means of the providential man."—*Marcus Dods*.

"Had not the vision of the burning bush shown that though thorns could not of themselves resist the shining flames, a Power was at hand who protected even what was so frail? Israel might be unable in itself to oppose Egypt, but its Redeemer was mighty. As God was in the flame of the bush and hindered its consuming that in which it glowed, so he was with his people in their trials, and would keep them from being destroyed. They would be saved, not by the skill or intellect of any leader, but only by the power and loving-kindness of Jehovah himself."—*Geikie*.

When her bishop reasoned with Jeanne d'Arc about her unfitness for what she felt herself called to undertake, her answer was, "I know that God wants me to deliver France, and therefore I know that he will give me the strength to do it." The Psalmist says, "God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (73:26).

TEACHERS' HELPS

In the Men's Class

Charles C. Stillman, Columbus, Ohio

GOD ENCOURAGES A LEADER

Have you ever heard the story of the wealthy gentleman who entered a certain jewelry-store in Washington, desiring to purchase an appropriate present for his wife? The occasion was the twenty-fifth anniversary of their marriage, a marriage that ushered in a very happy domestic experience. The senior salesman directed his attention to the prospective customer. A rare necklace that had been in the possession of the store for a decade challenged the interest of the gentleman. The senior salesman was meticulously garbed, shaved and manicured. He was the essence of courtesy and politeness, and prided himself that he knew how to sell. The price of the necklace was \$50,000. The possible buyer wavered, deliberated, but decided he would not take the article. It was almost a sale. He started to go away.

The proprietor, conscious of what had been going on, said to the man, nearing the front door, "Would you be willing to let me show you that necklace?" They went to a rear room, shut the door, and together admired the truly

wonderful and beautiful article. The owner fondled the necklace, called the individual gems by their first names as it were, told the history of the necklace, how he came to have possession of it, and how long he had had it. He made no apparent effort to sell it. After the gentleman had written his check for fifty thousand dollars, he said to the proprietor, "How is it that you sold this to me when your efficient and courteous associate could not do it?"

"I do not know," was the reply; "I did not try to sell it to you; the fact is I am sorry to see the beautiful piece leave my possession, though I have been wanting a customer for it for ten years. Its beauty and rarity have worked themselves into my very soul. That necklace has become a part of me."

It is commonplace in salesmanship that a man must himself be "sold" on his product. Community chest campaign solicitors are always invited to make their own subscriptions before starting out to secure those of others. Irvin Cobb says, in effect, that it is one of the mysteries of the writing business that, in order to make the deepest impression on your reader, you must know what you are writing about. S. R. Hall, in "Writing an Advertisement," comments:

"A New York advertising agency, on getting a contract for a large amount of tobacco advertising, as the first step sent a trained investigator and writer to Cuba to study Cuban tobacco at first hand."

The greatest encouragement Moses had, as he stood on the threshold of his very difficult mission, was the fact that Jehovah promised to be with him. Next was his belief in his own mission. Then came faith in his associates, and a developed faith in himself.

Our best preparation for religious, philanthropic or civil service is to secure such thorough knowledge of its potentialities, accomplishments and underlying philosophy that we can believe in it thoroughly. Moses "hemmed and hawed" a great deal about this assignment. But he knew his people. He was aware of their needs. So, then, he had God—and a knowledge of and belief in his own mission.

It is rather human of Moses that he wanted an associate. I admit I like him for that. Apparently Moses and Aaron made a good team. We humans do need each other. In more ways than one "it is not good for man to be alone." Aaron was a good talker. Maybe Moses was more practical. I notice, however, that they went together to interview Pharaoh. When Moses and Aaron met in the wilderness and kissed each other (Exod. 4:27) they symbolized the great need of humanity. That need is twofold: recognition of a common enemy; cooperative procedure in attacking it.

The great enemy of the American people (in my humble judgment) is a maniacal hunt for pleasure, the fulfillment of which is predicated upon the ability to get and spend money. The secret of organization to fight cooperatively this enemy has not yet been revealed. Some day our churches will learn how better to emphasize the unselfishness of Jesus as a regnant force in civilization. If we are to survive, greed must give way to love, and money must make room for service.

Moses became one of the world's greatest. He developed confidence in himself to a functioning degree. "True religion never comes to us in the aspect of an external authority simply demanding our assent; it always comes appealing to, seeking to awaken those rational and moral powers with which God has endowed us."—J. W. A. Stewart.

Dare anyone set limits to this combination: Faith in God, faith in a mission, faith in one another, faith in self? Faith, the victory, that overcometh!

Before My Class of Women

Colena Michael Anderson,
McMinnville, Oregon

Twelve years ago, on our first cross-country auto trip from New York to San Francisco, initiating our return to China, the children, then five and three years old, often grew restless. Nothing would

quiet them but stories. Their favorite was the story of Moses.

Perhaps it was their favorite because in my eagerness to entertain the children I exercised my imagination as I had not exercised it before, and, by filling in details not given in Exodus, Moses grew from a biblical character into a daily traveling companion. After a few repetitions the children came to wait for that thrilling phrase, "Let my people go!" Sometimes they took turns saying those words; sometimes all of us would say them together like a chorus; sometimes the chauffeur, daddy, would give us a real treat by saying them all by himself, very stern, very commanding, "Let my people go!"

Like a high-flung banner those words marched on through the story, and as we marched with them we felt ourselves bound together by the unity of a new and thrilling experience. Small wonder that I feel a quickening of interest as now I travel again with this old companion.

"Strong in the strength of the Lord!" How true that is of Moses! It was no light thing for him to go to hard-hearted Pharaoh and say, "Let my people go!" It was no light thing for him to say, "And if thou refuse, behold I will smite thy borders with frogs. . . I will send swarms of flies . . . and locusts." No light thing to say, "And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt." One needed strength to say words like those.

It was, I believe, this strength that fascinated the children. Here was once someone who was afraid (Exod. 4:10) and yet went on to say such brave words and do such courageous acts. Here were acts that took the strength of a giant; here strength and courage far beyond that of an ordinary man. The young hearts thrilled to the "plus" quality. We must admit there is an overwhelmingly large "plus" in Moses' courage. Even if the story had been written without the mention of Jehovah, we'd know that of himself Moses never could have been so full of courage and daring persistence.

Over and over again the Scriptures tell us God is strength.

"Jehovah is my strength and my song; and he is become my salvation," sang Moses and the children of Israel.

"Jehovah is the strength of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid?" sang the Psalmist.

"The everlasting God, Jehovah, fainteth not, neither is weary. . . He giveth power to the faint, and to him that hath no might he increaseth strength" (Isa. 40:28, 29).

How like the blood-transfusions of today! What these transfusions are to weakened bodies the strength of God is and always has been to weakened spirits.

"Strong in the strength of God!" What experiences that phrase brings to us! Each one of you, I am sure, has in her treasure-chest of memories one that has to do with the strength of God that

came in her hour of need to feed her own faltering strength.

Pearl Buck in *The Exile* gives never-to-be-forgotten illustration of strength in the life of her mother. The editor of *The Woman's Home Companion* (December, 1935) wrote, "It is one of the most dramatic and moving incidents we have ever read." Perhaps you remember it—the account of Carrie's dealing with the Chinese ruffians who came to kill her and her children. The story tells how she threw open the door to them and disarmed them by serving tea as she would have served it to guests.

A dramatic incident, indeed! But it seems to me that the real drama was the quiet hour before the men came storming into the courtyard, when Carrie went into her own room and shut the door and fell upon her knees and prayed, "it is thy will, save us; but in any case help me not to be afraid."

The author writes: "She knelt for long time then, thinking of what she must do. At last she rose, fortified with her own courage and a good stout anger that came welling up."

I have often wondered why Pearl Buck explained Carrie's strength as she did. Could anyone's own courage and a good stout anger ever sustain one through such a trial? Was there no "plus" to Carrie's native courage, no strength from the Strength of all life? I believe there was. Don't you?

The Lesson Illustrated

GOD'S CHOICE OF IMPLEMENT

What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod (Exod. 4:2).

It was probably only a shepherd's crook. What a history, however, awaited it! It was to be stretched out over the Red Sea, pointing a pathway through its depths; to smite the flinty rock; to win victory over the hosts of Amalek; to be known as the rod of God. When God wants an implement for his service he does not choose the golden scepter, but the shepherd's crook; the weakest and meanest thing he can find—a ram's horn, a cake of barley meal, an ox-goad, an earthen pitcher, a shepherd's sling. . . a rod with God behind it is mightier than the vastest army.—F. B. Meyer.

BEGINNINGS

Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth (Exod. 4:12).

Because many cannot understand advance how they can succeed at each successive step, they fail to undertake. We have to make a beginning to begin to learn. It is like a man with a lantern picking his way through the dark, each step throws the light just enough ahead for the next step. So the way to understand is to solve inch by inch. Trying itself is often an interpreter of success. "The beginning is half the whole." (Pythagoras).—B. Y. P. U. Quarterly.

LESSON IV. JULY 25. EQUIPPED FOR A NEW ERA

Exod. 11: 4 to 12: 36. (Verses printed, Exod. 12: 21-28)

GENERAL THEME: GOD PREPARES A PEOPLE

Prepared by MITCHELL BRONK, D. D.

Devotional Reading for the Opening Service: Psalm 63: 1-7

KEY VERSE: The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself.—Deut. 7: 6

21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover.

22 And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.

23 For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.

24 And ye shall observe this thing for

an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever.

25 And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service.

26 And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?

27 That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.

28 And the children of Israel went away, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

to risk the loss of the great army of Hebrew labor. He was a supreme and autocratic ruler and could not brook the impertinent meddling of a couple of serfs. Then, too, Moses had thrown at him the name of his God, and what to the mighty Egyptian monarch was this Jehovah of the Hebrews? But notice that in his extremity he begs a blessing from that same Jehovah: "and ask a blessing for me also" (12:32).

Their deliverance is marked by the beginning of a new calendar. "This month" (12:2) is of course Nisan, or Abib, our March-April. Previously their year had begun in the autumn; and even after the exile the autumnal year's beginning, the first or tenth of Tishri, survived ecclesiastically, the other being especially the civil New Year's.

The Lesson Before Us

I. THE PASSOVER

The ritual of the Passover was a changing one throughout Old Testament history; that is, in minor details. The Samaritan Jews as they survive today in Palestine follow more closely than orthodox Jews the original prescriptions for the festival. It is believed that an ancient festival of the Hebrews—older than Moses—was used as its basis; and that it was to observe this older festival that the Israelites would go a three-days' journey into the wilderness (3:18; 5:3).

The Passover (from the Hebrew verb *pasah*, "to pass over," "to spring over") the greatest of all Israelitish festivals, became an enduring memorial of the providence of God in sparing those first-born of the Hebrew exiles in Egypt; and therefore of the last awful plague; and so of the deliverance which that plague was effective to procure.

The whole conception of the festival and its observance exerted a profound influence upon the religion of the people of Israel, and by its prophecy and symbolism upon Christianity. It is, in fact, difficult to imagine the Christian religion apart from the idea and typology of the Passover.

II. THE LAMB

As a sacrament it was to be a repetition of their last hurried meal in Egypt; of a choice, year-old, male lamb or kid, roasted whole—whose blood had been used to mark the portal of the house where the feast was being celebrated—eaten with bread that had not had time to ferment (matstoth) and bitter herbs; eaten standing, staff in hand, and with girdle tightened for the journey (cp. Num. 9:5ff.; Deut. 16:2; Ezek. 45:21).

A Bible Message for Every Day

Monday. God Prepares a People. Exod. 12:21-28. Memorial days gather up the lessons of the year that has gone, to send us forward into the future prepared and hopeful.

Tuesday. Preparation Through Repentance. Matt. 3:1-6. John means that the Kingdom is going to be so different that men will have to change their whole point of view—attitudes—if they enter it. To love Christ you must discard a lot of other loves!

Wednesday. Preparation Through Pardon. 2 Chron. 30:13-20. Such a spiritual, ecclesiastical housecleaning as that described here is almost always needed. The real revival involves a lot of "res"—repentance, reformation, re-consecration, restoration to God's favor.

Thursday. Preparation for Service. Chron. 35:1-6. It seems to us extremely formal, mechanical, all these offerings; but it was teaching the people the great religious truth that you cannot get near to God without giving.

Friday. Preparation for Worship. Ezra 1:16-22. "I couldn't enter into the spirit of the minister's prayer and I didn't get much out of his sermon, and I guess the reason was that I let the plate go by," a man said to me one time.

Saturday. Preparation for Victory. Joshua 5:10-15. In the no-man's-land of life God feeds us "out of his hand"; in the promised lands he says, "Now you do it—with my help!"

Sunday. Preparation for a New Era. Mark 14:17-25. And His blood had to be the seal of the new covenant that made that New Era possible. For "without shedding of blood is no remission."

At the Threshold of the Lesson

In this lesson we come closer to the heart of our Christian gospel than in almost any other Old Testament passage. The whole plan of God's provision for our salvation through Christ is prefigured. The Passover's relation to the Lord's Supper also gives it added interest to the Christian.

The awful struggle between Moses and the great Pharaoh draws to a close. The Hebrew prince-refugee, Midianite shepherd, wins out because he is God's ambassador and agent. When proud man puts up a stubborn resistance to God it is necessary for God to use harsh, even desperate, measures.

Bloody water, animal pests, hail and darkness, had plagued the Egyptians almost to the breaking-point, but still the Pharaoh obstinately refused to let the Israelites go. But in the face of this last dreadful visitation, when "there was not a house where there was not one dead"—not even his own palace—and first-born at that, the king had to give in. That very night he sent for Moses and Aaron and said: "Away with you from my people, both you and the Israelites! Go, worship Jehovah!"

There is a divine arrangement for sparing the Hebrew first-born. The portals of every Israelitish house, its lintel and door-posts, was to be blood-marked—"blood stains and blood saves!"—then when the death-angel went his rounds he would know that into that home he might not enter.

Why did Pharaoh hold out so persistently and at such a terrible cost to his land? is sometimes asked. It has been suggested that he had enormous building operations under way and was unwilling

It was to be a family observance; and this is significant, for Judaism has ever been a domestic faith and has always sanctified family life. Provision was made for the gathering into smaller family circles of the solitary. "It was a species of consecration of the entire household by a communion feast, and the lamb being a sacrifice, deity was a participant" (Carrier).

A maximum of twenty and a minimum of ten persons for a Passover celebration came to be the rule. The meal could be eaten only during the night—by which seems to be meant in what we would call "the gloaming"; between sunset and dark.

The Passover was to be a perpetual observance (12:14). Repeatedly in Scripture the words "forever" are added to the injunctions. It would be a wonderfully dramatic and impressive object-lesson to the coming generations of God's wise and good providence with the fathers. When asked by his children about the escape from Egypt, a pious Israelite would only need to point to this festival (12:26, 27). It came to be for the Jews a sort of national and religious Independence Day.

III. THE BLOOD

There has been much allegorizing about the Passover. For example, the bitter herbs signify the bitterness of the Egyptian bondage. That the lamb was to be entirely consumed was a warning that now they were through with Egypt. And so on.—Goethe has the line: "All things transitory as symbols are sent"—But the supreme, graphic fact for us in this religious observance of the Jews is the blood of the lamb.

As lamb's blood once saved their loved ones and became the sign of their deliverance, so it looks across the ages to the New Covenant, Testament, Dispensation, in which the blood of the Lamb of God saves the world from sin; which provided that the judgment of God should pass over the life that had marked itself with that holier blood (Heb. 9:11ff.).

Our Lord Jesus Christ certainly had the deeper meaning of the Passover in mind when he established the ordinance that in his church was to take its place; especially since it was inaugurated at what was manifestly a regular Passover meal (Luke 22:11).

Practical Questions for Class Discussion

- ¶ Why does blood figure so largely in both the Old and the New Dispensation? What passages of Scripture throw light on this?
- ¶ How much of the Passover is there in our Lord's Supper? That is, what elements of the one have passed over into the other?
- ¶ Would it be right for a Christian today to participate in a Passover celebration? Why not?

¶ How did God prepare the world for the new era with Christ?

¶ In this year 1937 we Americans are looking forward to—expecting—praying for—a new era; the word "New Deal" has been much upon our lips. How should we let God prepare us for it?

¶ Is it possible for the individual effectively and happily to go on into a new life period ("turn a new corner") without preparation therefor?

¶ How much do memorial days and seasons mean to you?

Notes and Comments

For our Paschal Lamb has already been sacrificed, Christ himself. So let us keep the unending feast, not with any old leaven, neither with leaven of malice and vice, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.—Mrs. Montgomery's translation of 1 Corinthians 5:7, 8.

The Passover is the oldest religious

ceremony of which we know (not counting prayer and praising God) that has been uninterruptedly observed. It has been called the bond that has held Jewish people to their God Jehovah for three millenniums. It was fulfilled and transformed in the Lord's Supper; the New Passover meal.

"The Lord's Supper means not only that the destroying forces pass over us and leave us in safety, but that the gracious loving God sees in our spiritual sharing of the sufferings of Christ an invitation to him to enter our lives. For us the feast is not only the feast of the Passover, but what might be called 'the feast of the enter-in.'—Doctor McConnell.

"Every babe is born into danger. Poisoned arrows of disease fly thick around its cradle. Temptations beset on every side. Evil lurks in the home and just outside the home monsters of destruction, great spotted serpents of pleasure and vice, lie in wait to crush it.—Snowden.

TEACHERS' HELPS

In the Men's Class

Charles C. Stillman, Columbus, Ohio

GOD PREPARES A PEOPLE

Religion presupposes a mutuality of interest and understanding between God and man. Such decidedly was present between Jehovah and the Israelites in the awe-full verses of our lesson text. In the theology of Israel and of (later) Judaism God was conceived as one who would punish his people for their sins, but who also would bring discomfiture to his people's enemies.

There was understanding here. Jehovah to Moses, to Aaron, to Pharaoh—that was one cycle. Jehovah to Moses, to Aaron, to the elders of Israel, to the people at large—that was the other cycle. Who could doubt that Jehovah was with Moses? Many evidences of the power of God abounded. There were wonderful tokens of God's favor.

"When a traveler in any Phoenician colony left the house where he had been a guest, he and his host broke a small piece of pottery in two, each keeping half. Later, if the guest had occasion to send a friend or agent to the same place, he would give him the half-plate, which when fitted to that held by the host would serve both to identify and recommend the bearer."—J. C. Mansfield.

Moses established rapport with the people of Israel, not by plates broken in two, but by various unmistakable signs of God's favor and support. Yet he had tremendous difficulty in maintaining their confidence. You remember what happened. Not only did Pharaoh refuse to let the people go to hold a feast unto Jehovah in the wilderness, but he accused Moses of trying to "loose the people from their works." So he

added burden on burden. Then the people complained bitterly to Moses.

Pharaoh's prescription was to give them more of the same. Tyrants often pursue such a course; when authority is questioned, bear down the harder—"If you want to know who is boss around here, start something." Such an attitude is responsible for much confusion in industry, in government, in the home and in many other social relationships. It is the opposite of cooperation. It indicates an inability or an unwillingness to appraise the thought processes of competitive groups. The trick in securing satisfactory social adjustment is to pour our thoughts rather than our prejudice.

Any student of human nature knows that men act on an emotional urge. A student of history knows that a strong base of action is indicated in progress. The words of Leonard T. Hobhouse are very applicable: "But though the desires and emotions of men account for the popularity or unpopularity of social theories they do not account for the theories themselves. These arise out of the intellectual situation, just as the prevalent attitude toward them arises out of the emotional situation, and, like all theories, they have in the end to run the ratchet of logical and evidential tests."

Pharaoh hardens. The people are bitter. Moses complains. Jehovah renews his promises. Most remarkable events follow, in series. There is the visitation of the plagues. Then comes the slaying of the first-born of Egypt.

The literal implications of this story of the Passover are hard for us to contemplate. Those houses that carry lamb blood on the lintels and side-posts were to be passed over. The messenger of death will pass through all other houses, stri-

g down the first-born in each and every household. "There was not a house where there was not one dead."

We can generalize in connection with this Passover's origin and say something like this: The cruel and stubborn heart, maintaining a course of action opposed to the revealed will of God, will eventually pay a heavy penalty; an oppressed people, in harmony with the will of God, will sooner or later reap the abundant rewards of a continuing fidelity.

Not strange that the Jews "observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons forever." That God did pass them over is understandably a cause of great rejoicing. That God did pass through the houses of the Egyptians, leaving death everywhere, is among the mysterious ways, "hard indeed for us to explain."

Death is always associated with life. Calvary is a Roman execution, but a universal salvation. The salvation of the Israelites had for its counterpart the death of the Egyptians.

"Pageants and pageantry. These terms which nowadays we associate with lively, colorful parades, bright displays and imposing spectacles originally applied to but one thing, a public hanging! The word 'pageant' itself comes from the Latin 'pagina,' meaning 'scaffold.'"—*High Lights of History*.

The outstanding thought of this lesson, then, seems to be this: When God prepares a people for a declared purpose, those who are in the way of the divine purposes pay severe penalties.

Before My Class of Women

Colena Michael Anderson,
McMinnville, Oregon

A few years ago in the Kikusui restaurant in Kobe, Japan, I found myself another Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's court. The restaurant is not only an eating-place, but something of a museum as well. Along the corridors are figures dressed in ancient armor. Coming upon them in the semidarkness, I started and all but cried aloud. Then I had to smile at myself. Frightened by an empty armor! After that I stood up to them and had a hard time to keep from laughing at their absurdity. Carrying that heavy metal on the outside, when a little love on the inside would have meant so much more security and safety! Aren't the Japanese a foolish folk?

A few months ago at the country club in Portland, Ore., I had the privilege of hearing Miss Muriel Lester, of London. The club that day was not only an eating-place, but a laboratory and observatory as well. Miss Lester herself was both a microscope and telescope, and showed us much in our surroundings that we had not nearly seen before. Through a simple experience she brought us face to face with the horror and ghastly tragedy of war. Focusing her forensic lens upon one of our modern safety-first devices,

she limned for us the curse attendant upon this equipment.

This is the story she told:

One day in London a friend of Miss Lester's, working with her at her neighborhood-house, was walking down the street when a little girl, poorly dressed and undernourished, rushed up to her and clinging to her skirts, cried, "Oh, Miss —, is it true that our country has a gas-mask for everyone living here?"

Taken aback by the unexpectedness and passion of both the embrace and the question, Miss — at first hesitated; then prompted by a rising pride in a government that would take such care of its citizens, she answered with great assurance, "Of course, dear."

"Are you very, very sure?" the little girl asked with tears in her eyes.

"Very. But you mustn't worry about gas-masks. You should be thinking about birds and flowers and things like that."

"Oh, but I can't. All night I've been wanting to find an answer to this question I just asked you. Do you think the country has masks for all the babies, too?"

"I—I think so." The woman was not so sure of her ground here. "All the babies" meant a careful check-up.

"But you're not dead sure." The child detected the hesitation. "Then I must ask someone else."

"Why must you know? Why are you so concerned?" It was now the woman's turn to ask questions.

"Because last night a little sister was born in our house, and oh, Miss —, I must know there'd be a gas-mask for her too. She's so tiny, maybe the men who make the masks don't know about her yet."

"Equipped for a new era" is our topic for today. Does this mean that we must be equipped with gas-masks? That was that little girl's interpretation. Civilization had brought her great enlightenment, hadn't it? Her deepest concern had to do with war. At heart her life was all consummate fear lest England be short one gas-mask! What hours of agony that one question of hers revealed! And she is but one of many.

A few days ago a "roto. section" of our local paper showed an ancient war-helmet alongside a modern gas-mask. At first glance they looked like duplicates. A second glance, however, showed that the mask was by far the more scientific of the two. That mask was something to be proud of. Brains by the skullsful had gone into its making. Physics, chemistry, metallography, all had contributed to the making of that mask. For what purpose? That some day not too many skulls should be found brainless? Or was it that more skulls of the enemy might be found empty? Is the era of gas-masks the new era to which we have to look forward with glad anticipation? Is the secret fear in the hearts of each of us that there won't be enough gas-masks in America to go around?

As I think how man in the past equipped himself for his new era by donning heavy armor, and how man in the present is equipping himself with masks, I wonder how God would have equipped us if he had full sway in our lives. I let go the reins of my imagination, and there between those two man-equipped warriors stands a third. I watch all three march down the corridor of the years. Soon the first two-figures drop from sight. Rust had consumed their armor and moths have eaten their garments and their skeletons will soon be returning to the dust from which they came. But the third Figure keeps marching on, far down the centuries, ever moving onward and upward. All around Him is light, and in that light I see his armor.

It is an armor forged at the anvils of eternal love, and men still call it what Paul of Tarsus once called it—the whole armor of God. Loins girded with truth, wearing a breastplate of righteousness, feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, having a shield of faith, helmeted with salvation, and wearing the sword of the word of God, that third Figure is able to march on long after the other two become dust, because He alone is fully equipped for the new era.

The Lesson Illustrated

God's PLAN FOR US

Ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord (Exod. 12:14). As the Israelites of old celebrated the first Passover, there in their midst was the coffin of their great ancestor Joseph. They must have remembered his prediction that they should return to their land, Canaan, and that they should take his remains back with them. As the Israelites held the remembrance feast in later years and looked back over their history, they could see very clearly that God had had a great plan for them.

We, too, can look back at God's great plan as we have our remembrance feast. Sometimes we cannot see God's plan very clearly every day, because we are so close to it. But as we look back over long periods of time, we can.

In view of all this—God's wonderful power, and his willingness to include us in his plan if we obey—what must be our attitude? On what will our obedience depend?—*Claribel Williams*.

OBEDIENCE

Did as the Lord had commanded (Exod. 12:28).

An engine-driver received the following order, as he was driving his luggage train a long journey: "Switch that train into the river." He did so, jumping from the engine as he attended to the order. He didn't know the meaning of it, but simply obeyed. Two or three minutes after, the mail-train came thundering past. He had saved hundreds of souls by obedience.—*C. R. Scoville*.

Order of Worship Service

(MERELY SUGGESTIVE)

Prepared by NATHAN PIERCE, JR.

OPENING MUSIC. Piano, organ or orchestra.
The pieces should be spirited enough to quiet the confusion, but sufficiently sober to put those present in a worshipful mood.

PRAYER, preferably by the superintendent, followed by the Lord's Prayer (in unison).

HYMN. Suggested: "Holy, Holy, Holy";
"Sweet Is the Work, My God, My King";
"Praise the Lord, Ye Heavens Adore Him."

RESPONSIVE READING.

Superintendent. I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence.

School. And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

Superintendent. The Lord hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies.

School. But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the Lord.

Superintendent. Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.

School. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

Superintendent and School. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord; and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken (Isa. 62:6-12).

HYMN. Suggested: "From Age to Age They Gather"; "For All the Saints Who from Their Labors Rest"; "Simply Trusting Ev'ry Day."

SCRIPTURE READING. Suggested: Philip-
pians 4:8-20; Isaiah 55; John 4:13-26.

SPECIAL EXERCISES, such as birthday offering, missionary, evangelistic, or temperance talk.

HYMN. Suggested: "Crown Him with Many Crowns"; "Who Is on the Lord's Side?"; "My Jesus, as Thou Wilt."

PRAYER (by one of the teachers, or the pastor).

CLASS PERIOD.

CLOSING WORSHIP.

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HYMN. Suggested: "Faith of Our Fathers"; "Hail the Glorious Golden City!"; "We're Marching to Zion."

BENEDICTION. Mizpah, or Numbers 6:24-26 (in unison).

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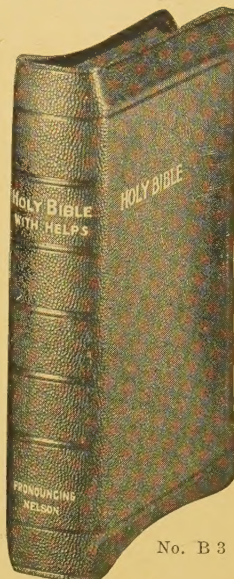
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hă-bim, and Năph 'tu-him, 14 and Păth-ru 'sim, and Căs 'lu-him (whence went forth the Phi-lis-tines), and Căph 'tō-rim. 15 And Că năan begat Sī 'dōn his first-born, and Heth, 16 and the Jēb 'ū-site, and the Ām 'ōr-ite, were the nations divi earth after the flood. 11 And the whole (language a speech. 2 And it car as they journeyed 'eas found a plain in the la

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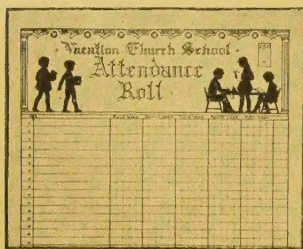
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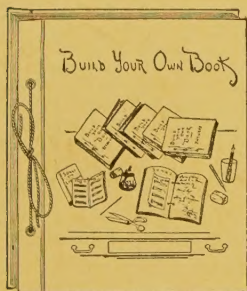
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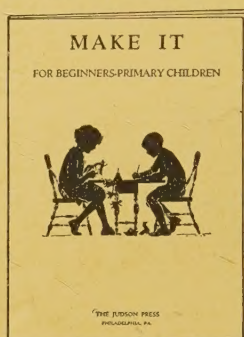
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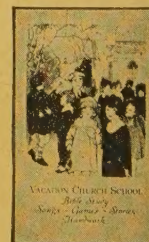


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